

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Vote your hopes, not your fears. Seize the moment."

— Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, who urged colleagues to support the health care reform bill in the Senate. After winning a late-night vote, Democrats hope to finally pass the legislation by Christmas Eve

See story on Page 8

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Navy working to extend fleet's life

Amid troubling inspections, panel convened to keep Pacific ships sailing

The Associated Press

HONOLULU — A four-member panel of Navy officials was convened to examine how to expand the lifespan of the U.S. Pacific Fleet following nearly a decade of increased fighting and troubling inspection reports in 2008.

The panel will look into how to better sustain ships so that their operational life grows by five years or more, making it easier to

achieve the Navy's goal of having a 313-ship fleet. The fleet now has 285 deployable ships.

The panel's examination started in September and is expected to be completed early next year. They will take into account the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey's troubling inspection results from 2008.

That report concluded that six ships — including the cruiser USS

Chosin, based in Pearl Harbor — were not fit for sustained combat operations. Work was done on the Chosin to correct the faults, and the ship did well in the training that followed, said Capt. Jeff Breslau, a spokesman for U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The USS Port Royal, also stationed in Pearl Harbor, ran aground last February off Honolulu Airport because of basic nav-

igational errors, according to the Navy Safety Investigation Board. These incidents factored into the overall assessment, said Breslau.

The panel will conduct a comprehensive review of training, manning and maintenance, but it's still too early to tell what will result, said Breslau.

"I don't know in the end how much of a shakeup this is going to result in," Breslau said.

Suit: Parents call new masks more 'kid-friendly'

SUIT, FROM PAGE 1

The XM52 Joint Service Chemical Environment Survivability Mask will continue to serve adults and children as young as 9.

Garcia said the new mask allows young children more room inside, a greater field of vision and even a built-in straw for drinking.

"This is more comfortable for them," he said.

The new mask may still be a tough sell for the youngest of children. Garcia said his daughter, Danielle, 4, initially balked when he asked her recently to try on the mask.

"Then, as soon as she put it on and she feels the air flowing on her face, she wants to do it again," he said. "The next day, she was asking, 'When can I put that on again?'"

When the mask was demonstrated Monday on Spc. Ione Barrera's 16-month-old daughter, Sariah, the child cried and fended off every attempt to place it over her head. Still, her mother said the new mask is an improvement.

The old masks, Barrera said, "kind of crept me out — it's like a plastic bag thrown over them. Now, they look like little astronaut suits, so I think it is a little more kid-friendly and doable."

"I mean, it's a weird concept to think about your kids having to wear a [protective] mask, but at



JON RABIROFF/Stars and Stripes

Capt. Allan Garcia, of the 2nd Infantry Division, watches Monday while Spc. Ione Barrera tries to place a newly issued chemical protection mask on her daughter Sariah.

the same time you have to look at the bright side — you can tell them they're astronauts ... for that period. Try to flip it around and not make it scary for them."

In the event hostilities ever resume on the peninsula, the threat of a chemical or biological attack from the North is very real, according to experts on the subject.

The Associated Press reported earlier this year that it is "widely believed the North has a chemical capability that it could unleash in the early stages of a land war to demoralize defending forces."

A 2007 Popular Mechanics investigative report, quoting a variety of well-placed sources, said North Korea has built "one of the

world's most extensive biochemical warfare programs."

"The weaponry is thought to have the potential to decimate [South Korea] and the [28,500] U.S. troops stationed there," the report said.

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It seems like yesterday the world heralded the start of a new millennium while fearing the onslaught of the Y2K bug. So much has happened since in a decade that produced some of the most extraordinary events in memory.

The Associated Press is examining the Aughts, the Zeros — whatever you want to call a decade that reached its low toward the

start, on Sept. 11, 2001, and has since pirouetted through wars and social networking, a roller-coaster economy and the election of the first black U.S. president.

TODAY: THE WARS THE TOLL OF CONFLICT

By BRIAN MURPHY
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — It was early April 2003. The city of Mosul in northern Iraq was in free fall.

The holdout units of Saddam Hussein's military had abandoned their posts sometime during the night. By midmorning, looters were helping themselves and vigilantes were beginning their revenge.

In a traffic circle, the garroted bodies of Saddam loyalists were propped up like scarecrows. At the university, libraries and labs were picked clean — right down to someone wheeling away a model skeleton that jiggled in a noisy dance of flailing arms and snapping jaw.

This is where I made a promise to a doctor I met amid the mayhem.

I had come across Dr. Salim Mohammed Yacoub after he banded together with colleagues to defend their hospital against the street pirates. We talked for a long time. It began with his views on the American-led invasion of his country but soon drifted into a broader conversation about the utter helplessness of civilians, like himself, caught in conflict.

He then said something as profound as anything I've ever heard about war.

"Remember, we don't live our lives in history books," Dr. Yacoub told me. I knew instantly what he meant. Scholars and pundits can analyze the strategic outcomes and judge the winners and losers from a safe distance. But there is none of that as war unfolds. There are just moments.

They come in every imaginable form: a car bomb's lethal spray of metal and glass, a unit pinned down by an ambush, neighbors turning on neighbors, a soldier packing for another tour, the pre-dawn salute of President Barack Obama at Dover Air Force Base for 18 soldiers killed in Afghanistan in a single week.

It's these countless fragments that have built the narrative of the post-Sept. 11 years. We pore over them to try to make sense of where we are and seek clues about what could come.

It was just the beginning of America's second war when I sat with Dr. Yacoub. He said: Come find me in five



An Iraqi looter pushes a cart in April 2003 as smoke rises from Saddam Hussein Hospital in downtown Baghdad. The country is moving toward some level of stability. But it came only after years that pushed Iraq perilously close to civil war between the Sunnis who lost power after Saddam's fall and the majority Shiites who took control of the aftermath.

AP photos

or six years, God willing. Then we can talk more about the wars and what they mean.

I told him I would try my best. We are now at that point.

The doctor was right about one thing. There is much to discuss.

In Iraq, it's now about holding the gains.

The country is moving toward some level of stability. But it came only after years that pushed Iraq perilously close to civil war between the Sunnis who lost power after Saddam's fall and the majority Shiites who took control of the aftermath. The tallies: more than 4,350 U.S. soldiers dead; at least 87,500 Iraqi civilians killed, according to government figures.

Insurgents still attack — most recently in late October with car bombs that killed at least 155 people in strikes against Baghdad municipal offices — but their attacks no longer appear capable of bringing down the government or seriously altering the Pentagon's plans to pull out the last troops in about two years.

The war in Afghanistan launched after 9/11, meanwhile, seems to be drifting out of the grasp of America

Iraq

Fallujah, November 2004: The U.S. military launches some of heaviest urban combat since Vietnam to recapture the city from insurgents making one of their first major stands against American forces.

Samarra, Feb. 22, 2006: A blast blamed on Sunni insurgents ravages Shiite shrine to begin more than a year of nearly nonstop sectarian bloodshed.

Anbar, late 2006: U.S. forces begin to make alliances with Sunni tribes turning against al-Qaida in Iraq and other insurgents.

Baghdad area, January 2007: Beginning of the U.S. "surge" of more than 20,000 additional troops.

Afghanistan

Tora Bora, December 2001: U.S. bombers and American-led ground forces stage assault on suspected mountain hideout of Osama bin Laden, who is believed to have slipped over border into neighboring Pakistan.

Spin Boldak, early 2003: Resurgent Taliban forces begin offensives.

Southern Afghanistan, July 2006: NATO forces take command of region of Taliban strongholds as battles increase.

Washington, 2009: President Barack Obama weighs calls to increase U.S. troops presence in Afghanistan.

and its allies. This is because their enemy isn't a fixed target. The Taliban is not an army, but an ideology. It draws as much from its puritanical reading of Islam as it does from Afghanistan's own lore as a graveyard for invaders.

But what I really wanted to talk about with Dr. Yacoub is his own story since we last met.

I found Dr. Yacoub in November. I tracked him down through his hospital — now called Al Salam, or Peace — which was closed from 2005 to 2007 when it was occupied by Kurdish fighters.

It's still surrounded by concrete blast walls in a city that's considered the last urban stronghold for al-Qaida in Iraq and other Sunni insurgents.

Dr. Yacoub remembered me and our conversation that day. I expected him to be surprised by my call and ask about my desire to make contact again. Instead, he simply recounted his life since the fall of Mosul. He sounded tired.

He remained in Mosul but kept a low profile while the hospital was closed. Doctors, academics and other

professionals were sometimes hit by targeted killings by insurgents.

Dr. Yacoub took no chances. He would rarely leave his neighborhood and managed to make some money with a home clinic.

Many colleagues fled to Syria or Jordan. He came close to leaving, but felt it was better to be a prisoner of violence in his own country than a refugee in another.

"So much suffering," he told me by phone. "I've seen so much suffering."

I reminded him of what he said to me in 2003 — that it would take years to gain a fuller perspective on the war. Certainly, I noted, violence is easing. This must be good news.

"Yes, yes," he said. "That is true. It is safer. I am back at work. But war goes deeper. It can break a soul. It can break the spirit. It robs people of hope. Those are wounds that take a long time to heal."

"Was the war worth it? That is a question not just for this war, but all wars. Ask me — ask the living — and they may say yes. We cannot ask the dead that question. But I think the answer might be different."

President Barack Obama salutes on Oct. 29 as troops at Dover Air Force Base, Del., carry the transfer case containing the remains of Army Sgt. Dale R. Griffin of Terre Haute, Ind., who died in Afghanistan.



Pakistani government reaches out to opposition

By SEBASTIAN ABBOT
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan's embattled government reached out to the opposition Monday as it sought to limit the damage from a recent Supreme Court decision striking down an amnesty protecting several of its senior officials from corruption charges.

The court verdict has plunged Pakistan into political turmoil, distracting the government at a time when the U.S. is calling

Ruling party troubled by court's amnesty decision

on the country to target Taliban and al-Qaida militants launching cross-border attacks against coalition troops in Afghanistan.

Some opposition members have called for officials who benefited from the amnesty, including President Asif Ali Zardari, to resign.

But the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group's senior leadership has refrained from taking such a tough stance, a move

that analysts say is driven by their desire to avoid destabilizing the country's fragile democratic system.

"I think the only real lifeline that can be thrown to the (ruling) Pakistan People's Party right now is if the opposition holds its fire and sees how this showdown between the political government and the judiciary plays out," said Cyril Almeida, an opinion writer

for Dawn, a leading English-language newspaper.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani likely had that calculation in mind on Monday when he met with Shahbaz Sharif, the brother of main opposition leader Nawaz Sharif and chief minister of Pakistan's largest province, Punjab.

The two leaders "agreed that the present democratic system ... would be protected and strengthened

at all costs to work for the welfare of the people," according to a statement issued by Gilani's office after the meeting.

The two parties continue to have serious differences, especially over the president's resistance to relinquishing extraordinary powers inherited from his predecessor, Pervez Musharraf. But the opposition does not want to rock the system so much that it opens up the possibility of a military coup, Almeida said.

Partner: U.S. pressures Pakistan on Haqqani network

PARTNER, FROM PAGE 1

Pakistanis are deeply suspicious of America's power and motives, making it difficult for their leaders to accede to Washington's pressure in public, lest they look like U.S. puppets.

A senior U.S. diplomat hinted at a separate agreement on the remote tribal areas that would allow the U.S. itself to take on some of the hidden war against Pakistan's militants.

Speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive talks with Pakistan, the diplomat said last week that more U.S. action is expected against the Haqqani network, led by longtime resistance fighter and former U.S. ally Jalaluddin Haqqani. His network, based in the Waziristan tribal area in northwest Pakistan, reportedly has strong ties with al-Qaida and targets U.S. forces in eastern Afghanistan from across the border.

The diplomat said the stepped-up U.S. action would come with Pakistani support, but would not elaborate on the potential cooperation.

Pakistani officials claim they have targeted the Haqqani leadership, albeit unsuccessfully, and will go after the network when the time is right. Some U.S. officials believe that, others don't.

Military officials say the Haqqani problem illustrates how the United States sometimes needs Pakistan more than the other way around.

The U.S. military now counts the Haqqani network as the single gravest threat to U.S. forces fighting over the border in Afghanistan, and badly wants Pakistan to push the militants from their border refuges.

But the Pakistani answer seems to be that unless and until the Haqqanis threaten Pakistan, they won't be a priority.

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, was the latest U.S. official to make the case in a visit to Pakistan's capital last week.

More than most U.S. officials, Mullen has cordial, long-standing relationships with Pakistan's gen-



MOHAMMAD SAJJAD/AP

Pakistani women walk past a police officer on Sunday in the troubled city of Peshawar.

erals, the strongest power base inside the country. Despite those ties, Mullen's quiet effort met with a polite noncommittal from his hosts.

Mullen advises patience and humility in dealing with Pakistan, a view not shared by some leading Republicans in Congress. Mullen said Pakistan doesn't get enough credit for the push since spring against militants in the Swat valley and South Waziristan.

"Too many people eagerly and easily criticize Pakistan for what they have not done," Mullen said Sunday, days after Pakistan's military leaders took Mullen on a tour of a reclaimed Swat.

"When I go to Swat, and look at what they did there on the military I think it's pretty extraordinary."

Most of the groups aligned against the U.S. are in North Waziristan, a tribal area not pressed hard by Pakistan's army. The only firepower directed at militants there comes from American missile-loaded drones.

Mullen told students at Pakistan's National Defense University that the U.S. is concerned about what it sees as a growing coordination among terrorist networks

in and around Pakistan.

"I do not, certainly, claim that they are great friends, but they are collaborating in ways that quite frankly, scare me quite a bit," Mullen said last week.

He did not come out and say Pakistan needs to expand the fight against militants. But his point was clear.

In an exchange of letters over recent weeks, Obama asked for more cooperation and Pakistan's president, Asif Ali Zardari, pledged some additional help, U.S. officials said. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private correspondence.

Without additional pressure from inside Pakistan, the only other option is for the U.S. to finish the fight on its own. But Pakistan doesn't allow outright U.S. military action on its soil.

Mullen seemed to recognize that when he told the military students that he knows the U.S. is perceived as acting in its own interests almost at any cost, so it can hardly ask others not to put their own needs first.

"Sometimes that gets lost on us," he said.

Insurgents target Iraqi poll workers

By MICHAEL HASTINGS
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — Insurgents have begun targeting Iraqi election workers in an apparent attempt to derail the March parliamentary vote, Iraqi officials said, prompting electoral authorities to restrict the movement of their employees and shelter some at a hotel in the Green Zone.

An election worker was killed in front of his Baghdad home last week, and a worker and the wife and son of another were kidnapped in the past 10 days, according to Faraj al-Haidari, the head of the Independent High Electoral Commission.

"It is not a coincidence to have three attacks against our employees," Haidari said. "Our situation is a tragedy. You can see the worry and mental anxiety on the faces of my employees."

Iraqi officials described the attacks as the latest attempt by al-Qaida in Iraq to destabilize the government ahead of the elections, scheduled for March 7. U.S. officials hope the elections, which were delayed by nearly two months as a result of political wrangling, will lead to a smooth transition of power that will allow them to sharply accelerate the withdrawal of troops.

The targeted violence has forced the electoral commission to increase security measures for its staffers, of which there are about 500 in Baghdad alone, including limiting their movement during the day and advising their families to relocate until after the elections.

The commission has requested that the Iraqi government allow it to house workers at Saddam Hussein's old Republican Palace, formerly the home to the U.S.

Embassy but now vacant. Rooms for higher-ranking officials have been secured at the Rasheed Hotel, a well-protected building in the fortified Green Zone where many Iraqi parliament members and foreign visitors stay.

Haidari said he has discussed the security issue with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and President Jalal Talabani.

"We have asked for more security guards," he said. "We are trying to give our employees better protection. We insist to continue our work."

The run-up to the election has been punctuated by bombings that have shaken the confidence of the Iraqi government and left more than 400 people dead.

Though it is unclear exactly who is responsible for the killing and kidnappings, Iraqi officials say they believe that al-Qaida in Iraq and insurgent groups affiliated with the former Baath Party are behind the violence.

The Islamic State of Iraq, an extremist umbrella group, has asserted responsibility for the deadly bombings of government buildings in August, October, and most recently, Dec. 8.

The violence against election workers fits into the insurgents' larger strategy to undermine and destabilize the Iraqi government.

"The electoral process is an important target to the insurgents because if they break it they will break all the political process in Iraq," Haidari said.

"We are all under threat of assassination," an election official said on the condition of anonymity for fear of retribution.

"We have a job to do and it will get worse as the election gets closer."

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IN THE WORLD

Iran cleric's funeral turns into protest

Mourners seize chance to rally against hard-line ruling regime

BY BRIAN MURPHY
The Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Tens of thousands of Iranian mourners turned the funeral procession of the country's most senior dissident cleric into an anti-government protest Monday, chanting "death to the dictator" and slogans in support of the opposition.

Crowds filled major streets, beating their chests in mourning, waving banners in the green colors of the opposition and shouting denunciations of Iran's rulers as Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri's body was carried to a shrine in Oom, Iran.

The death of Montazeri on Sunday, at the age of 87, pushed Iranian authorities into a difficult spot. They were obliged to pay respects to one of the patriarchs of the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the one-time heir apparent to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Montazeri broke with Iran's clerical leadership and became a vehement critic, denouncing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei and calling the post-election crackdown the work of a dictatorship.

Thousands of mourners also marched in the cleric's hometown of Najafabad, where Web footage showed crowds of men beating their chests and chanting, "Oppressed Montazeri, you are with God now."

Women in black robes shouted, "Dictator, dictator, Montazeri is alive," and "Montazeri, you who spoke the truth: Your path will be followed."

Montazeri broke with the regime in the 1980s after claiming that the ruling clerics violated the ideals of the revolution by taking absolute power rather than serving as advisers to political leaders.

He spent five years under house arrest and had only a minor role in political affairs after being released in 2003.

But the outrage after June's disputed presidential election gave him a new voice that resonated with a younger generation. His most pivotal moments came in the summer when he denounced the "despotic" factics and "crimes"



AF

Opposition supporters and pro-government demonstrators scuffle during a funeral ceremony for Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri in the city of Qom, Iran. Montazeri, who died Sunday at the age of 87, was a key figure in the 1979 Islamic Revolution who later accused his fellow clerical leaders of imposing dictatorship in the name of Islam.

of the ruling clerics — a bold step that encouraged protesters to break taboos about criticism of Khomeini's successor, Khamenei. In demonstrations earlier this

month, students shouted “Death to the dictator!” and burned pictures of Khamenei — an act that was almost unthinkable just a few months ago.

Iranian calls for ban on nuclear weapons

TOKYO — Iran's chief nuclear negotiator called for a global nuclear weapons ban on Monday but insisted all nations — including his own — have the right to develop nuclear energy.

Visiting Tokyo to meet with senior Japanese officials, Saeed Jalili said his country's nuclear program is for civilian purposes, although the U.S. and other nations fear its goal is to produce weapons.

Meanwhile, the United States has been building momentum toward imposing more sanctions against Iran, after the revelation in September that Iran was secretly building a second uranium-enrichment facility near the city of Oom.

For now, the U.S. and its allies are pressing Tehran to accept a U.N.-brokered plan under which Iran would ship the majority of its low-enriched uranium out of the country.

"The Tehran reactor is for pharmaceutical use, for humanitarian use," Jalili said. "Using nuclear energy is the right of every nation."

From The Associated Press

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N. Korea declares 'firing zone' along disputed border

S. Korean ships warned to stay out

By JAE-SOON CHANG
The Associated Press

SEOUL — North Korea declared waters along its disputed sea border with South Korea a "firing zone" Monday and warned ships from the South to stay away from the area, which was the scene of a deadly clash last month.

The naval command in Pyongyang accused the South of "reckless military provocations" in the area in an attempt to hold on to what it called an illegal border. It accused its neighbor of violating its waters and staging military drills in the area and vowed to protect its border by force.

North Korea does not recognize the sea border, drawn unilaterally by the United Nations at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, and has long claimed that it should be redrawn farther south.

The dispute led to deadly skirmishes in 1999, 2002 and last month.

In the November incident, ships from the two sides exchanged fire in the disputed waters, leaving one North Korean sailor dead and three others wounded, according

to the South.

Pyongyang said Monday that it was designating the area a "peacetime naval firing zone of coastal and island artillery units" for its military, which apparently means that artillery shells could land in the waters at any time.

"All fishing boats and warships are required to take security measures by themselves in that zone to protect themselves," the naval command said in a statement, carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency.

It said it was taking the measure to cope with a "grave situation" in the disputed waters that it blamed the South for creating.

South Korea rejected the North's claim of border violations as groundless.

"We consider it deeply regrettable that North Korea's naval command made unreasonable claims threatening our warships and boats that operate normally in our area," the South's navy said in a statement.

"We are fully ready to defend the maritime demarcation line and will act sternly in case of North Korean provocations."



AP

Polish police unload part of the "Arbeit Macht Frei" sign that was stolen last week from Auschwitz and recovered by Polish police after a three-day search, in Krakow, Poland, on Monday.

Police recover Auschwitz sign

By VANESSA GERA
The Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Polish police have recovered the infamous Nazi sign stolen from the former Auschwitz death camp, cut into three pieces, and said Monday it appeared to have been taken by common criminals seeking profit.

Five men were arrested late Sunday after the damaged "Arbeit Macht Frei" ("Work Sets You Free") sign was found near one of their homes in a snowy forest outside Czernikowo, a village near the northern Polish city of Torun, across the country from the memorial site.

The brazen pre-dawn theft Friday of one of the Holocaust's

most chilling symbols provoked outrage around the world. Polish leaders launched an intensive search for the 16-foot sign, which spanned the main gate of the camp in southern Poland where more than 1 million people, mostly Jews, were killed during World War II.

The men's arrest late Sunday came after more than 100 tips, said Andrzej Rokita, the chief police investigator in the case.

Police said it was too soon to say what the motive for the theft was, but they are investigating whether the Nazi memorabilia market may have played a part. The suspects do not have known neo-Nazi or other far-right links, Rokita said.

Sri Lankan navy seizes rebel ship

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka's navy has captured a ship it says was once used to smuggle arms by the now-defeated Tamil Tiger insurgents, a military spokesman said Monday.

Navy spokesman Capt. Athula Senarath said the 300-foot-long "Princess Chrisanta" was seized by the navy outside Sri Lankan waters and was brought to the island's main port in Colombo on Monday.

The navy has destroyed eight rebel ships that were transporting weapons during the last three years, the spokesman said.

China envoy urges peace with Taiwan

TAICHUNG, Taiwan — China's senior Taiwan envoy told his hosts Monday that Beijing wants to "move down the road of peace," a day after tens of thousands of Taiwanese demonstrators blasted the government for its China-friendly policies.

Chen Yunlin's statement in the central city of Taichung came amid heavy security, with police preventing several hundred protesters from besieging his hotel. The protesters view Chen as the spearhead for Beijing's proclaimed policy of uniting Taiwan with the mainland. The sides split amid civil war in 1949.

Chen arrived in Taichung on Monday to discuss a wide-ranging free-trade agreement with Taiwanese officials, part of Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou's push to link the island's economy ever closer to China's.

From The Associated Press

Eurostar set to resume train service

By JENNY BARCHFIELD
The Associated Press

PARIS — Eurostar said it would resume its high-speed rail service linking Britain, France and Belgium on Tuesday after a three-day suspension that stranded tens of thousands of travelers and left French President Nicolas Sarkozy indignant.

Officials at the Eurostar train company said they had identified the problem that caused the suspension: unusually dry, powdery snow that got into the trains' engines. However, more snow was forecast for early Tuesday — just as train service would be getting back up to speed.

With as many as 40,000 people affected by the suspension, and TV channels broadcasting images of would-be travelers holed up in train stations, Eurostar tried to make amends by offering its "deepest apologies" and promising compensation.

France's rail woes were not limited to the Eurostar, though.

A suburban Paris train went off the tracks Sunday night, prompting part of the line to be shut down. Another suburban train line was crippled by strikes that entered their second week Monday, snarling Paris traffic and wreaking havoc for holiday shoppers.



AKIRA SUEMORI/AP

Travelers wait for trains at St. Pancras Station in London as Eurostar train services remained suspended for a third straight day on Monday. The French government on Monday said it would conduct a thorough investigation into the shutdown.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Japanese yen (Dec. 22)	88.00
South Korean won (Dec. 22)	1,147.00
Euro costs (Dec. 22)	\$1.4721
Dollar buys (Dec. 22)	€ 0.6795
British pound (Dec. 22)	\$1.65

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound	\$1.6090
Canada (Dollar)	1.0553
China (Yuan)	6.8315
Denmark (Krone)	5.1921
Egypt (Pound)	\$1.5020
Euro	\$1.4334/0.6976
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7545
Hungary (Forint)	191.57
Israel (Shekel)	3.8000
Japan (Yen)	90.87
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2862
Norway (Krone)	5.8252
Philippines (Peso)	46.63
Poland (Zloty)	2.92
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7506
Singapore (Dollar)	1.4041
South Korea (Won)	1,183.00
Switzerland (Franc)	1.0431
Thailand (Baht)	33.24
Turkey (New Lira)	1.5225

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.50
Federal funds market rate	0.00-0.25
3-month bill	0.03
30-year bond	4.46

Sources: Bank of America, The Associated Press

IN THE STATES

Senate Dems clear health care hurdle

BY ERICA WERNER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A crucial, middle-of-the-night test vote behind them, Senate Democrats prepared Monday for more votes at odd hours in their drive to pass historic legislation to cover the uninsured and try to curb rising medical costs.

All 58 Democrats and the Senate's two independents held together early Monday against unanimous Republican opposition to President Barack Obama's health care overhaul. They provided the exact 60-40 margin needed to shut down a threatened GOP filibuster. The next vote is now expected around 7:20 a.m. Tuesday.

Obama called the vote "a big victory for the American people," adding that it will make a "tremendous difference for families, for seniors, for businesses and for the country as a whole."

Monday's Senate vote came shortly after 1 a.m. with the nation's capital blanketed in snow, the unusual timing made necessary in order to get to a final vote by Christmas Eve presuming Republicans stretch out the debate as much as the rules allow. Despite the late hour and a harshly partisan atmosphere, Democrats' spirits were high.

"Today we are closer than we've ever been to making Sen. Ted Kennedy's dream of uni-



HARRY HAMBURG/AP

Victoria Reggie Kennedy, widow of the late Sen. Ted Kennedy, greets Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., on Monday after a health care vote in Washington. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., looks on.

versal health insurance coverage a reality," Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, said ahead of the vote, alluding to the late senator who died of cancer in August.

"Vote your hopes, not your fears. Seize the moment," Harkin urged colleagues.

Kennedy's widow, Victoria, watched the vote from the visitor's gallery along with administration officials who have worked intensely on the issue. Senators

cast their votes from their desks, a practice reserved for issues of particular importance.

The outcome was preordained after Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., wrangled his fractious caucus into line over the course of the past several months, culminating in a frenzy of last-minute deals to win over the final holdouts, independent Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and conservative Democrat Ben

Nelson of Nebraska.

Obama's oft-stated goal of a bipartisan health bill was not met, despite the president's extensive courtship of moderate Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine, the only Republican to support the bill in committee.

In the end Snowe said she was "extremely disappointed" in what she called a rushed process that left scant time for her to review, much less amend, the bill.

Ex-student pleads guilty in decapitation

CHRISTIANSBURG, Va. — A former Virginia Tech student accused of decapitating another student at a campus eatery pleaded guilty to murder Monday as prosecutors described the killer as an obsessed, jilted lover.

Haiyang Zhu had fallen in love with Xin Yang but she rejected him, saying that she had a boyfriend she planned to marry, prosecutors said in revealing a motive for the first time.

Zhu faces up to life in prison. He did not say why he killed the woman during the plea hearing.

Prosecutor Brad Finch said on the morning of Jan. 21, Zhu purchased the 8-inch butcher knife used in the murder, two other knives and a claw hammer. He also called Yang a dozen times after buying the weapons.

Appeals court: Polanski sex case to proceed

LOS ANGELES — A California appeals court has rejected Roman Polanski's bid to have his sex case dismissed.

The California 2nd District Court of Appeal announced Monday it had denied the petition, with justices saying they are "deeply concerned" about the alleged misconduct.

Attorneys for the fugitive director argued earlier this month that misconduct in the case was grounds for dismissal of a charge of having unlawful sex with a minor. They also contended Polanski didn't need to be present to argue for dismissal.

The court disagreed on both issues.

Astor's son gets jail for looting mom's money

NEW YORK — Brooke Astor's 85-year-old son has been sentenced to one to three years in prison for plundering the New York philanthropist's millions.

Anthony Marshall was sentenced Monday to the minimum allowed. The judge gave him 30 days to get his affairs in order.

He tried, but failed, to get the judge to throw out the part of his October conviction.

Marshall was convicted of exploiting Astor's mental frailty to steal from her nearly \$200 million fortune. She died at 105 in 2007.

From The Associated Press

Blanketed in snow, East Coast tries to dig out

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Millions of East Coast commuters returned to work Monday over slick roads and icy sidewalks after a weekend winter storm dropped record snowfall, interrupted holiday shopping and stranded travelers.

The storm crept up the coast on Saturday and Sunday, walloping states from the mid-Atlantic to New England, causing hundreds of delayed or canceled flights, widespread power outages and treacherous driving conditions. The weather was blamed for at least seven deaths, including a snowmobile driver who crashed head-on into a horse-drawn buggy in Pennsylvania's Amish country.

Meanwhile, jammed airports in the Northeast were working their way back to normal. On Monday, the Federal Aviation Administration was reporting that all major airports on the East Coast had average flight delays of less than 15 minutes.

Still, three major airports in the New York City area were expecting an unusually busy holiday travel week as many who were stranded by the cancellation of 1,200 flights over the weekend try to make it to their destinations.

In Washington, federal agencies were closed Monday and bus service was running behind schedule, but the Metro finally was able



MATT ROURKE/AP

Lanier Evans digs his way out Sunday in the aftermath of a snow storm in Philadelphia.

to open all 86 of its rail stations. Subways had been limited to underground stations for two days.

On the rails, Amtrak canceled some trains in the East on Monday because of the storm and warned that long-distance trains to the South and West faced substantial delays.

Power outages remained an issue. More than 130,000 people were without power in West Virginia and Virginia as of Monday morning.

Web retailers extend shipping deadlines

Retail Web sites have bumped back deadlines and will offer free express shipping after weekend snowstorms kept holiday shoppers home in large areas of the East Coast.

Amazon.com has extended the cutoff for standard shipping by one day through Monday. Macy's Web site is offering free shipping through Monday, and J.C. Penney through Tuesday.

The moves are a bid to capture business from snowed-in shoppers in the final days before Christmas. The weekend before Christmas is one of the busiest of the year, but snow that stretched from the Carolinas to New England closed malls and kept shoppers off treacherous roads.

From The Associated Press

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EDUCATION



BEV SCHILLING/Stars and Stripes

Enrollment increase a drain on Pell Grants

By LIBBY QUAID
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An unexpected surge in college enrollment has created an \$18 billion shortfall in the Pell Grant program, the biggest in its history.

An administration official told The Associated Press the program will cost \$18 billion more than Congress and the White House had anticipated over the next three years. The official, who was not authorized to speak publicly about the budget, spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The administration is working with Congress to fill the gap, and we are committed to making sure the U.S. has an educated work force able to fill the jobs of the 21st century," the official said.

The red ink probably won't affect students and parents, but it will affect the federal government, which must find a way to come up with the extra dollars.

Shortfalls and surpluses are common in the Pell Grant program, which forms the foundation for federal college aid. Anyone who is eligible gets a grant, making it difficult for the government to anticipate how many people will apply. Pell Grants typically go to families earning less than \$40,000, and about 6.3 million students received Pell Grants last year.

Yet, the looming shortfall is the largest in the 36-year history of the program, which has an entire budget of about \$18 billion.

Two factors led to the shortfall, said Terry Hartle, lobbyist for the American Council on Education, the leading higher education group in Washington.

First, the bleak job market is driving people back to school.

Second, Congress boosted the amount of the Pell Grant this year, which made more families eligible for aid. The program's eligibility formula changes, letting more middle-income families into the program, whenever the grant amount increases.

Grading gifts for the teacher

By HEIDI STEVENS
Chicago Tribune

Back away from that mug display, parents. Put down the porcelain figurine. And whatever you do, avoid anything with the dreaded apple on it.

Your kids' teachers have a new spokesman, and he's here to stop the gifting madness that engulfs his fellow educators this time of year.

Phillip Done, a Palo Alto, Calif., elementary teacher and author of the newly released "Close Encounters of the Third-Grade Kind" (Center Street), has received a foil-wrapped avocado, a used roll of duct tape and countless mugs over the years. He has also received some items he truly treasures.

He let us in on a few secrets of teacher

"The hands-down, No. 1 gift of all time is a note of appreciation from the parents."

Phillip Done
Teacher and author

gifting.

Don't feel obligated to give one.

"Of course, it's lovely if you get something," Done said. "But we'd rather not get something than something we want to throw away or regift."

Don't give ties or jewelry.

"One of my colleagues had a student give her a pair of earrings he said reminded him of her. They were hoop earrings with huge

marijuana leaves in them," Done said. "And the kids just wait and wait for you to wear their gift."

Other don'ts: Items with your child's photo on them, and the aforementioned mugs, figurines and apples.

Do think gift cards, especially for movie theaters and bookstores.

Do get creative.

"One year I had a mom take care of my lunches for a week," Done said. "She just let me know, 'Lunch is covered this week,' and sent in a bagged lunch for me every day. Another mom brought me a Starbucks every morning for a week."

Don't forget to say thanks.

"The hands-down, No. 1 gift of all time is a note of appreciation from the parents," Done said. "We don't need any more baked goods or candy or anything, but when we get those cards, we save them all."

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wired world

EACH THURSDAY

Weekly tech talk goes the distance to bring you the latest updates from military-specific to government, business and the computer industry.

Governor supports energy project

WY CHEYENNE — Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal is supporting a Texas company's proposal to build a major plant for turning coal into gasoline.

The U.S. Department of Energy is weighing an application from DKRW Advanced Fuels LLC of Houston for a loan to help build the proposed \$2.7 billion coal-to-gasoline plant near Medicine Bow.

The Sierra Club in Wyoming has expressed concern the plant will cause air pollution and disrupt sage grouse.

Legislator calling for cell phone warnings

ME AUGUSTA — A Maine legislator wants to make the state the first to require cell phones to carry warnings that they can cause brain cancer.

Democratic Rep. Andrea Boland of Sanford said numerous studies point to a risk and she plans to present her proposal to Maine legislators in January.

At issue is radiation emitted by all cell phones. There's little consensus among scientists that the phones pose a cancer risk, but some scientists suggest erring on the side of caution.

Killing suspect nabbed at Mexican border

TX NACOGDOCHES — Authorities say a man suspected of killing his wife in east Texas was arrested trying to enter Mexico.

Nacogdoches Sheriff's Office Sgt. Kevin Capel says John Jacob Presley was being held in the county jail on a murder charge in lieu of \$300,000 bond.

U.S. Border Patrol officials captured Presley on a warrant the Nacogdoches Sheriff's Office issued in conjunction with the death of Presley's estranged wife, 35-year-old Stephanie Fowler Presley.

Her body was found along a rural road in Nacogdoches County. Nacogdoches Sheriff Thomas Kerss says an autopsy revealed a single gun shot killed her.

1 dead, 5 hurt in car-motorcycle crash

HI HONOLULU — A motorcyclist is dead and a young boy is in critical condition after a car-motorcycle collision in Aiea.

Four other people were injured in the accident.

Emergency Services Department spokesman Bryan Cheplic says the accident happened at Iwaiwa Street and Halawa Heights Road.

Neo-Nazis disrupt Hanukkah celebration

CA RIVERSIDE — Congregants at Temple Beth El who had gathered to celebrate the last night of Hanukkah were met by a group of neo-Nazi demonstrators who waved red-and-black swastika flags outside the Reform synagogue.

Rabbi Suzanne Singer said she suspects that the demonstration



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

— the third such protest in recent months at the temple — was connected to a counter protest held by members of the synagogue in September, when neo-Nazis protested at a day laborer site.

Judge extends block on controversial law

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma County judge has extended a temporary restraining order that blocks enforcement of a strict abortion law. The law would require doctors to report personal information about women who seek abortions and for the information to be posted on a public Web site.

The law was to have taken effect Nov. 1. District Judge Daniel Owens said the restraining order would remain in force until a lawsuit seeking to throw out the law is resolved. A hearing is set for Feb. 19.

The Center for Reproductive Rights and two women sued in September, saying the legislation violated a rule in the Oklahoma constitution that requires one piece of legislation deal with only one issue. Supporters have said the measure deals only with abortion.



Chillin' out

A cardinal sits in the snow and ice at White Water Park in Miami, Ohio.

Governor: Kill car tax, but hike income tax

VA RICHMOND — Virginia's outgoing Democratic governor, Timothy Kaine, proposed replacing the long-hated car tax with an income tax increase, a radical restructuring of the state's tax code that was immediately rejected by the governor-elect and other Republican leaders.

Kaine told legislators that the only way to avoid cuts deeper than the \$2.3 billion he proposed would be to raise taxes by \$1.9 billion to make up for a potential \$4.2 billion budget shortfall created by the state's ongoing financial crisis.

But Republican leaders — including Gov.-elect Robert McDonnell, who easily won after promising not to raise taxes, and House Speaker William Howell — vowed to kill what would be Virginia's first income tax increase in nearly four decades.

Probation term: No dating without state OK

WI APPLETON — A Wisconsin teenager will need legal permission to date girls for the next three years after he was convicted of fleeing to Tennessee with his girlfriend in a stolen car.

Nineteen-year-old Jordan S. Christensen of Appleton was sentenced to one year in jail and three years' probation. Outagamie County Judge John Des Jardins has ordered "no dating of the opposite sex without permission of your probation agent."

Christensen had pleaded no contest to charges of auto theft, stealing a firearm and bail jumping. He apologized for his actions before the sentencing.

Convicted murderer, rapist facing life terms

AZ TUCSON — A 24-year-old Tucson man who says Satan told him to rape three women and kill two of them faces two life terms plus 20 years in prison.

Apollo Keith Ortega originally faced the death penalty in the 2008 slayings of Margie Ortiz and Norma Jean Conner, but agreed last month to the two terms of life in prison without the possibility of parole. The three women all were attacked over a 19-day period.

Mayor seeks tax on college tuition

PA PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh City Council is set to take a preliminary vote on a proposed first-of-its-kind tax on student tuition.

Mayor Luke Ravenstahl says the measure could generate \$16.2 million in annual revenue to help pay for pensions of retired city employees. He's urging the council to vote for the 1 percent tuition tax at its next meeting. A final vote is expected soon.

The universities say the tax isn't fair to students and would be challenged in court. Ravenstahl says the tax would amount to about \$130 per student annually.



Shreddin' Santas

Numerous Santa Clauses snowboard at The Canyons Ski Resort in Park City, Utah. The first 50 guests who donned Santa attire skied for free.



Eyes and ears of the law

San Jose, Calif., police officers, including Jessie Aragon, foreground, wear a recording device during a news conference at SJPD headquarters. San Jose police are the testing head-mounted cameras to record interactions with the public.



End of an era

Robert Offerle, supervisor at the University of Arizona's nuclear research reactor, gives a demonstration at the control console. The University of Arizona plans to begin decommissioning its 51-year-old nuclear research reactor by mid-2010, ending a half-century of specialized nuclear research.



Classy dolls

Indianapolis Children's Museum Chief Conservator Christy O'Grady, left, and Collections Manager Joan Skroko make final adjustments to Andy Warhol's "Barbie," on loan from the Mattel Archives. The Andy Warhol painting of Barbie and interactive fashion shows are the highlights of a new exhibit at the museum to commemorate the iconic doll's 50th anniversary.



Air time

Chance Gilmore catches some air while sledding at Forest Hill Park in Richmond, Va.



Goodbye for now

Staff Sgt. Mike Cole of the 148th Fighter Wing holds his 5-year-old daughter, Emily, before he departs for Afghanistan.

Officials investigate deaths of 2,000 birds

TX DALHART — Officials are trying to determine why about 2,000 geese and ducks were found dead near the Texas Panhandle town of Dalhart.

The Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife said preliminary results indicate the cause could be naturally-occurring avian cholera.

Biologists suspect near-zero temperatures triggered stress, which can cause disease outbreaks.

Wildlife officials said isolated events like that are not uncommon for the area.

Councilman planning nude art exhibit

OR ASHLAND — A city council member in an Oregon town noted for its Shakespeare festival and its occasional dustups over public nudity is planning an exhibit of his art gallery of nude portraits and conceptual art involving naked people.

For gallery-goers as well, clothing will be optional — even though it's winter in Ashland, a small college town on the California border.

Council member Eric Navickas is opposed to a possible ban on public nudity in the town. Nudity is legal in Ashland, except in the city center and public parks.

"We feel that the nude ban is not only an attack on freedom of expression but also an attack on the human body itself," Navickas said.

A ban was proposed after two men were spotted walking naked near schools. The council is to vote next month on the issue.

Judge: Stabbing suspect must be accompanied

HI LIHUE — A Kauai man accused of fatally stabbing his landlord and wounding his own stepson is not being allowed to leave the grounds of a state mental hospital unaccompanied.

For the second time in 13 months, Circuit Judge Kathleen Watanabe denied Raymond Earl Ard's request to be allowed to leave the campus of Oahu's Hawaii State Hospital on his own.

Ard, 44, was accused of stabbing his landlord, Jon Kerns, and his stepson, Richard Iwatate, in February 2005.

He was found guilty of first-degree attempted murder but then acquitted by reason of insanity.

Man guilty of indecency by being nude in home

DC WASHINGTON — The suburban Fairfax County, Va., man who was arrested for being naked — in his home — was found guilty of indecent exposure, but the judge did not fine him or sentence him to jail.

Erick Williamson, 29, continued to believe that he had done nothing wrong and that he did not purposely expose himself to two women and a 7-year-old boy who had walked past his house. He immediately appealed his conviction.

A seven-person jury in misdemeanor appeals court will rule on the propriety of Williamson's domestic nudity in February.

Boy injured, parents baffled by shooting

HI HONOLULU — A Honolulu boy is recovering after he was hit in the arm by a bullet during a drive-by shooting.

Adrian Faitalia, 13, was struck as he rode in his family's car.

Family members say they had just left Faitalia's volleyball scrimmage and were looking for a place to eat when a car cut their vehicle off and opened fire.

Adrian was struck in the left arm, and was also cut by glass from a shattered window.

Police have not identified a suspect in the case. Family members say they want to know why someone would shoot at them.

Unemployment falls as workers move out

CA LOS ANGELES — California's employment misery continued in November, as employers sliced another 10,200 workers from their payrolls.

The statewide unemployment rate dipped slightly to 12.3 percent last month from 12.5 percent in October, according to figures released by the Employment Development Department, but only because thousands of discouraged workers have left the labor force or even moved out of state.

In some areas of California, including depressed urban neighborhoods in Los Angeles, 1 in 5 people in the labor force is out of work. The fallout from prolonged unemployment is pounding those regions as businesses close, homes tumble into foreclosure and frustration mounts.

DOJ probes overturned conviction in '81 killing

DC WASHINGTON — Investigators at the U.S. Justice Department are being asked to look into the case of a man freed from prison after 28 years because DNA tests showed he was innocent.

The conviction of Donald Eugene Gates in a 1981 rape and murder was based largely on testimony by an FBI forensic analyst whose work later came under fire. Documents show prosecutors knew years ago that the discredited analyst was involved but failed to inform Gates' attorneys.

Threatening note found in airplane bathroom

TX AUSTIN — The Transportation Security Administration says nothing suspicious was found after a sweep of an American Airlines jet where a passenger found a threatening note.

TSA spokeswoman Andrea McCauley said passengers, their baggage and the aircraft were re-screened with "no findings of any prohibited item."

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport spokesman Jason Zielinski said the plane had left the gate with 129 passengers on board when a passenger found the note in the lavatory.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Power couple

Eastwood, Freeman reunite for 'Invictus'

Nelson Mandela made it clear that Morgan Freeman was the man he would want to play him in a film.

When it came time to play Mandela in "Invictus," Freeman told producing partner Lori McCreary that he had two men in mind to direct the film, which dramatizes Mandela's partnership with a South African rugby star (played by Matt Damon) to rally their post-apartheid countrymen behind the team's underdog quest for the 1995 World Cup.

"I said, 'I can only think of two. Clint Eastwood, and then there's Clint Eastwood.' He's the best director I know," Freeman says of the filmmaker who gave him a plum role in "Unforgiven" and an Academy Award-winning part in "Million Dollar Baby."

Freeman's comment comes moments before Eastwood enters the room for a joint interview, amiable banter and wisecracks ensuing as the two longtime friends and colleagues talk about their third collaboration.

"Are you supposed to be here?" Freeman says.

Informed of the compliment Freeman had just paid him as his only choice to direct "Invictus," Eastwood shoots back: "That's very kind of him. He's obviously a man of very good taste and selectivity in life."

Their give-and-take reflects the camaraderie that Eastwood, 79, and Freeman, 72, captured on screen as hired mercenaries in 1992's Western "Unforgiven" and as ringside pals in 2004's boxing drama "Million Dollar Baby." Both films dominated the Oscars, their wins including best picture and director for Eastwood.

With both movies, Eastwood came calling for Freeman. With "Invictus," Freeman was the first man on board, sending the script Eastwood's way, hoping his friend would want to direct.

Freeman had been meeting with Mandela since the 1990s with the idea of adapting the jailed-activist-turned-president's memoir "Long Walk to Freedom" for the big screen. The actor eventually set it aside, finding Mandela's life story too expansive to fit into a film.

"How can you take all that and put it into a movie?"

Freeman says. "Even if you condensed it down to a three-hour movie, how could you do it justice?"

Then journalist John Carlin told Freeman about his book, "Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game That Made a Nation," recounting the new South African president's cheerleading that united whites and blacks behind the national rugby team.

The effort defined the healing spirit Mandela brought to the nation, Freeman says.

But "Invictus" is not being embraced by all South Africans, who complain that South Africans should be starring in movies about their own stories rather than American actors. South Africans do, however, have key roles in the film, including Patrick Mofokeng as Mandela's chief bodyguard.

Eastwood sees a lot of similarities between Mandela and Freeman.

"I've always thought he was the perfect guy to be playing Nelson Mandela," Eastwood says. "Morgan has the same presence when he walks in the room as an actor that Mr. Mandela has as a politician walking into a room. ... They both are intelligent, and they both seem to have a lovely sense of humor and a lot of life. They both get in trouble in the same way, sometimes."

"Ssh," Freeman interjects.

"Invictus" marks the first time Eastwood worked with Freeman as a director only, not as a co-star, too.

— David Germain/The Associated Press



Warner Bros.

Director Clint Eastwood, left, talks with actor Matt Damon, right, and Morgan Freeman on the set of "Invictus."

Damon eager to tackle big role, work with Eastwood

When Clint Eastwood called, he didn't have to ask Matt Damon twice.

"I didn't hesitate when I heard I would get to be in a film directed by Clint Eastwood and work with Morgan Freeman," Damon says of his role in "Invictus."

Damon plays Francois Pienaar, captain of the South African rugby team when Nelson Mandela (Morgan Freeman) was elected president in 1994. Mandela turns to the team to help reunite the deeply divided country.

"The structure of the script is you have one of the greatest world leaders of our time appealing to this other leader and forging a bond and basically saying 'I need to use you to do this' and this team exceeding its expectation. It was a metaphor for what the country needed to do because everyone expected them to not be able to heal,"

Damon says.

The story was so important, Damon went through a long preparation of learning a South African accent and developing his upper body strength so he would look like a world-class rugby player. Damon says he works on anything that might destroy the illusion of the character he's playing when he takes on a role.

There was a brief moment when Damon wasn't certain if he was the right person to play Pienaar — and it had nothing to do with acting.

"I went to his house to meet him and when he came to the door I just did this," Damon, 5-foot-10, says as he tilts his head back to mimic looking up to the 6-foot-3 rugby player. "The first thing I said was, 'I look bigger on film.'"

— Rick Bentley/The Fresno Bee

'Avatar' takes off

James Cameron launched his science-fiction epic "Avatar" into a safe orbit as the costly film soared to No. 1 with \$73 million domestically and \$159.2 million overseas, for a \$232.2 million worldwide total.

With that big a start, distributor 20th Century Fox was quick to proclaim it made a good investment with the estimated \$400 million spent to make and market the film.

The movie is Cameron's first narrative feature since 1997's "Titanic," the king of modern blockbusters.

"Avatar" stars Sam Worthington and Zoe Saldana in a love story amid human-alien conflict on a distant moon in the 22nd century.

Storms on the East Coast kept many people at home, cutting into weekend movie business.

The previous weekend's No. 1 movie, Disney's animated musical "The Princess and the Frog," slipped to second place with \$12.2 million, raising its total to \$44.8 million.

Paramount's recession story "Up in the Air," which led last Tuesday's Golden Globes announcement with six nominations, broke into the top 10 as it widened to more theaters ahead of its nationwide expansion Wednesday.

— The Associated Press

Quick hits from Wireless Flash

Osbourne gets colorful

The usually pale Kelly Osbourne is now the face of a spray-on tan sold by St. Tropez. Osbourne swears the product doesn't make you orange at all, and is as surprised as anyone that she's fronting the campaign.



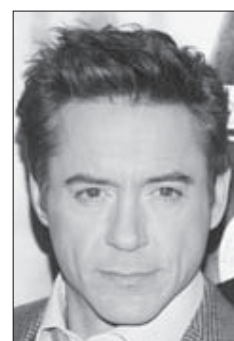
Jude Law ISN'T a girl?



Jude Law regrets ever changing his name. The "Sherlock Holmes" actor was born David Law, but changed his moniker to Jude in the 1980s. Growing up, he was often mistaken for a girl. When he joined the National Youth Music Theatre as a teenager, they assigned him to a girl's dorm by accident.

In other 'Holmes' news ...

Robert Downey Jr. was worried he wasn't cool enough to play Sherlock Holmes in Guy Ritchie's upcoming sleuth film. Since Ritchie has worked with leading men like Brad Pitt, Downey Jr. was intimidated he'd "never measure up" to Pitt's "badass" performance in "Snatch."



DAN BALILTY/AP



The Associated Press

The dwelling and older discoveries of nearby tombs in burial caves suggest that Nazareth was an out-of-the-way hamlet of around 50 houses on a patch of about four acres. It was evidently populated by Jews of modest

"This may well have been a

It is not clear how big the dwelling is — excavators have uncovered 900 square feet of the house.

Forecast highs for Tuesday, Dec. 22



A Pacific storm and steady onshore flow will produce rain and snow showers throughout the Northwest and cooler temperatures in the Great Basin. Disturbance in the North will spark snow in the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley.

Weather Underground • AP

Monday's global temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	La Paz	59	40	r
Amsterdam	37	21	sn	Lima	78	68	pr
Athens	68	57	rn	Lisbon	46	35	rs
Auckland	71	60	rn	London	36	28	sn
Baghdad	51	49	cl	Madrid	41	16	cl
Bahia	71	53	pc	Managua	89	71	cl
Bahrain	71	64	cl	Manila	82	75	pr
Bangkok	86	73	pc	Mecca	98	69	cl
Barbados	86	78	pc	Melbourne	70	55	pr
Barcelona	45	28	cl	Mexico City	62	46	cdy
Beijing	37	23	cl	Montevideo	77	66	rs
Beirut	68	57	pc	Montreal	16	6	cdy
Belgrade	20	6	sn	Moscow	10	0	sn
Berlin	15	8	sn	Nairobi	84	56	pc
Bermuda	70	62	rn	Nassau	73	66	pc
Bogota	68	51	pc	New Delhi	69	48	cl
Brasilia	84	64	rn	Nice	45	31	cl
Brisbane	78	69	rn	Osaka	46	33	cl
Brussels	33	11	sn	Oslo	16	12	rs
Buenos Aires	21	14	sn	Panama	87	75	cl
Budapest	19	2	sn	Paris	35	24	pc
Buenos Aires	81	69	cl	Perth	95	68	cl
Cairo	79	65	pc	Prague	14	1	sn
Calgary	23	10	sn	Rio de Janeiro	82	71	cl
Caracas	86	75	cl	Rome	56	26	pc
Colombo	86	75	pc	San Jose	80	66	pc
Copenhagen	26	22	sn	San Salvador	77	62	rs
Dhahran	75	55	cl	Santiago	88	51	cl
Dhaka	81	63	cl	Sao Paulo	84	66	pc
Dili	87	76	rn	Sapporo	26	22	sn
Dubai	78	66	cl	Seoul	30	10	pc
Dublin	34	27	cl	Singapore	88	75	rs
Frankfurt	37	3	sn	Sofia	33	15	sn
Geneva	31	9	sn	Stockholm	24	12	sn
Guatemala	62	55	rn	Sydney	72	66	pc
Hanoi	61	55	cdy	Taipei	55	50	pc
Harare	80	59	rn	Tegucigalpa	78	62	rs
Havana	73	66	pc	Tehran	58	44	pc
Helsinki	22	8	sn	Tel Aviv	77	48	cl
Hong Kong	63	51	pc	Tokyo	51	33	pc
Islamabad	60	44	rn	Turin	19	8	pc
Istanbul	63	47	cl	Toronto	34	23	cdy
Jakarta	89	75	cl	Tucson	54	46	pc
Jerusalem	77	48	cl	Valetta	53	50	rs
Johannesburg	79	56	rn	Vancouver	50	45	rs
Kabul	48	30	pc	Vienna	16	6	sn
Kiev	12	0	sn	Warsaw	9	0	sn
Kuala Lumpur	85	75	rn	Zurich	32	6	sn

Map of Japan and Surrounding Regions

Locations and Weather Data:

Location	Weather Data
Seoul	43/30
Osan	45/32
Busan	45/27
Sasebo	60/50
Iwakuni	55/39
Tokyo	53/35
Misawa	28/21
Okinawa	73/60
Guam	86/77

Legend:

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Tuesday's U.S. temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Casper	43	23	Clr	Erie	27	21	Cldy	Jacksonville	62	57	Cldy	Montgomery	60	39	Clr	Richmond	44	32	Clr	Springfield, Ill	32	11	Clr
Abilene, Tex	58	16	Clr	Charleston, S.C.	57	22	PCldy	Eugene	50	43	Rain	Juneau	30	21	Snow	Nashville	45	32	Clr	Roanoke	45	32	Clr	Springfield, Mo	46	16	Clr
Akron, Ohio	58	18	Clr	Charleston, W.Va.	57	22	PCldy	Evansville	36	13	Clr	Kansas City	39	11	Clr	New Orleans	61	31	Clr	Rochester	27	21	Snow	Syracuse	49	23	Snow
Albany, N.Y.	28	21	PCldy	Charlotte, N.C.	50	35	Clr	Fairbanks	118	18	Clr	Key West	82	74	PCldy	New York City	38	31	Clr	Rockford	21	02	PCldy	Tallahassee	65	55	Cldy
Albuquerque	50	26	PCldy	Chattanooga	51	31	Clr	Fargo	128	11	Cldy	Knoxville	47	29	Clr	Newark	37	31	Clr	Sacramento	56	42	Rain	Tampa	76	65	Cldy
Allentown, Pa.	36	27	PCldy	Cheyenne	48	30	PCldy	Flagstaff	45	15	PCldy	Lake Charles	58	42	Cldy	Norfolk, Va.	44	40	Clr	St Louis	40	16	Clr	Toledo	28	16	PCldy
Amarillo	57	22	Clr	Chicago	25	09	Clr	Flint	26	14	Cldy	Lansing	26	12	Cldy	North Platte	35	05	PCldy	St Petersburg	75	65	Cldy	Topeka	41	13	Clr
Anchorage	15	11	Cldy	Cincinnati	26	30	PCldy	Fort Smith	55	26	Clr	Las Vegas	59	43	PCldy	Oklahoma City	47	25	Clr	St Thomas	84	75	PCldy	Tucson	69	39	PCldy
Asheville	49	32	Clr	Cleveland	28	18	Cldy	Fort Wayne	31	15	Clr	Lexington	37	22	Clr	Omaha	27	02	Clr	Salem, Ore.	53	46	Rain	Tulsa	51	20	Clr
Atlanta	58	38	Clr	Colorado Springs	53	23	PCldy	Fresno	60	41	Cldy	Lincoln	29	06	PCldy	Orlando	76	63	Cldy	Salt Lake City	42	32	Cldy	Tupelo	48	29	Clr
Atlantic City	41	32	Clr	Columbia, S.C.	53	42	Clr	Goodland	49	18	PCldy	Little Rock	47	26	Clr	Paducah	39	19	Clr	San Angelo	54	26	Clr	Waco	52	32	Clr
Clinton	35	23	PCldy	Columbus, Ga.	53	35	PCldy	Grand Junction	38	23	PCldy	Los Angeles	38	23	PCldy	Pasadena	38	36	Snow	Sandwich, England	51	34	PCldy	Washington, D.C.	41	34	PCldy
Baltimore	40	32	PCldy	Columbus, Ohio	34	18	PCldy	Grand Rapids	26	14	Cldy	Louisville	38	23	PCldy	Peoria	29	09	Clr	San Diego	66	49	PCldy	W. Palm Beach	82	68	PCldy
Baton Rouge	60	41	PCldy	Concord, N.H.	28	22	Clr	Great Falls	42	26	Clr	Lubbock	55	22	Clr	Philadelphia	40	32	Clr	San Francisco	57	50	Rain	Wichita	44	16	PCldy
Billings	41	22	Cldy	Corpus Christi	55	47	Rain	Green Bay	14	03	Cldy	Macon	62	42	Clr	Phoenix	71	47	PCldy	San Jose	59	45	Cldy	Wichita Falls	51	26	Clr
Birmingham	56	32	Clr	Dallas-Ft Worth	52	31	Clr	Greensboro, N.C.	46	32	Clr	Madison	15	04	PCldy	Pittsburgh	30	19	Cldy	Santa Fe	46	16	PCldy	Wilkes-Barre	31	25	Cldy
Bismarck	21	05	PCldy	Dayton	32	16	PCldy	Harrisburg	39	29	PCldy	Medford	48	37	Rain	Pocatello	38	24	Cldy	St Ste Marie	16	08	Cldy	Wilmington, Del.	40	31	Clr
Boise	39	33	Rain	Daytona Beach	72	62	Cldy	Hartford Spgfl	32	23	Clr	Memphis	46	26	Clr	Portland, Maine	30	23	Clr	Savannah	59	49	PCldy	Yakima	36	27	Cldy
Boston	31	25	Clr	Denver	56	24	PCldy	Helena	38	18	Cldy	Miami Beach	84	72	PCldy	Portland, Ore.	52	44	Rain	Seattle	49	40	Rain	Youngstown	27	19	Cldy
Bridgeport	35	29	Clr	Des Moines	22	01	Clr	Honolulu	80	69	PCldy	Midland-Odessa	55	27	Clr	Providence	41	36	Clr	Shreveport	53	34	PCldy				
Brighton	56	48	Rain	Detroit	57	25	PCldy	Huntsville	42	33	PCldy	Midwest City	42	36	PCldy	Raleigh-Durham	38	31	PCldy	Siloam Springs	23	16	PCldy				
Buffalo	27	20	Cldy	Duluth	60	31	06811	C	1	06811	C	Mpls-St Paul	13	10	C				Sioux Falls	19	02	PCldy					
Burlington, Vt.	19	16	PCldy	El Paso	62	33	Clr	Indianapolis	54	37	Clr	Missoula	38	26	Cldy	Rapid City	40	09	PCldy	South Bend	27	11	Cldy				
Caribou, Maine	19	19	Clr	Elkins	62	32	PCldy	Jackson, Miss.	57	36	Clr	Mobile	62	41	PCldy	Repo	46	32	PCldy	Sokane	36	31	Rain				
National temperature extremes High: 87, Mon., Naples, Fla. Low: -32, Mon., Jordan, Mont.																											



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OPINION

Industry changes could solve crew fatigue

BY TIFFANY HAWK

As we cram into airplanes this holiday season, there is an aspect of air travel that we're likely to be putting out of our minds — pilots asleep at the yoke and flight attendants so tired their mental states can be likened to a drunken stupor.

Most Americans are protected by the Fair Labor Standards Act, which since 1938 has limited the workday to eight hours and the workweek to 40 hours. Airlines, which are governed by the Federal Aviation Administration, are exempt. They can push their workers up to 20 hours per day, without bearing the cost of overtime pay, which discourages such practice.

The toll this can take on pilots has been in the news since a Northwest Airlines flight overshoot its destination two months ago. But the rest of the flight crew is also suffering.

As a former flight attendant, I fought two in-flight fires, calmed thousands of passengers through mechanical failures and assisted in more medical emergencies than I can recall. I have also fallen asleep standing up. I've snuck naps in the lavatory, sitting on the toilet with a dirty airline pillow wedged between my shoulder and the sink. I've been outright incapable of figuring the simple arithmetic required for liquor accounting. I have asked a passenger what he wanted to drink and then stuck a bag of pretzels into a cup before handing it to him.

This level of exhaustion is dangerous. Several sleep studies have shown that 17 hours of wakefulness is equivalent to a blood-alcohol level of 0.05 percent. Between 19 and 24 hours of wakefulness, that number goes up to 0.10 percent — over the legal limit for driving in every U.S. state and considerably over the FAA restriction of 0.04 percent. Chronically sleeping only four to six hours per night is as harmful to cognitive performance as missing two en-



tire nights of sleep.

For crew and passenger safety, the FAA mandates that flight attendants work a maximum of 14 hours, extendable to 20 hours, with minimum rest periods of nine hours, reducible to eight hours. Pilots have slightly different restrictions — 16 hours maximum and up to 18 hours if necessary.

These guidelines were intended as extreme outer limits, and it was expected that they'd be reined in by collective bargaining agreements. But after years of losses, cutbacks and contract renegotiations have made long shifts and short recoveries standard operating procedure at too many airlines.

For flight crews, an eight-hour rest period begins 15 minutes after "door open" on landing to the next day's push-back from the gate. It's ludicrous: Flight crews must be at the airport an hour before flight time — to check in, go through a security screening, get briefed, board the plane and even pass out pre-departure beverages to first-class passengers. But all of that work is counted as "rest." When you take into account transportation to and from a hotel, which could be 30 or more minutes away, or finding something to eat at the end of a "day," crew members may only have an opportunity for four or five hours' sleep.

Contrast that with the Air Force, which, despite being at war, must give its air crews (including flight attendants and those performing flight attendant duties) a minimum of 12 hours' rest.

Of course, not all airlines push their

crews to the limit. For example, Southwest Airlines, year after year the most profitable carrier, has the highest-paid flight attendants and pilots in the industry. For flight attendants, it offers a reasonable 10.5 hour maximum "duty day," which can be pushed

to 12.5 hours; pilots' maximum "duty day" is 13 hours, which can be pushed to 15 hours.

Why don't flight crew members simply migrate to the best airlines? I can answer that for

flight attendants: Partly, it's an issue of seniority. If someone leaves one airline after, say, 15 years, they will lose that seniority at a new airline, which not only means a pay cut but also several years of being on call 24 hours a day. But mostly it's because they dream of the good old days, which in the airline industry means pre-Sept. 11, when the industry was in better shape and such brutal schedules were the exception not the rule. Like anyone in an abusive relationship, they are living in denial. And a bit of fear. If they demand more, managers threaten, the airline will go under.

If an airline worries it can't afford to hire more flight attendants should schedules require safe doses of sleep, we should remind its shareholders that the company could get hundreds of them for the price of one chief executive officer. Though rested, the CEO won't be much help when your Airbus dives into the Hudson.

Tiffany Hawk spent five years as a flight attendant at United Airlines and Virgin America before becoming a travel writer. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury



OPINION

Crunching more numbers on health care

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

In June, a long time ago in politics, Democrats in the Senate were briefly jubilant. For the first time in a generation, they held 60 seats, the "supermajority" required to control the body's proceedings. The road to enacting President Barack Obama's center-left agenda looked, for a moment, almost smooth.

But that's not the way the Senate works. It's an assembly of 100 independent egos, not a parliament of two disciplined parties. The word "control" doesn't apply.

Last week, as Majority Leader Harry Reid struggled to corral 60 votes to move a health care bill forward, the jubilation of summer gave way to desperation on cold winter nights — with occasional flashes of recrimination.

"Everybody gets to be the 60th senator," observed Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV, D-W.Va., a liberal champion of health care reform. What he meant was that when any one senator can threaten to stop a bill, many senators will be tempted to try — if only to see what they can get in return for their support.

Last week, three senators each held the role of No. 60 in turn — and each held the fate of Obama's health care proposals in his (or her) hand.

First was Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, who lost his party's primary election in 2006, won re-election as an independent, campaigned against Obama in 2008 — but still claims a seat in the Democratic majority.

Lieberman won several days in the spotlight for announcing that he would vote against any bill that included either of two measures favored by liberals: a government-run health insurance plan (known as the "public option") or a plan to offer Medicare to people younger than 65 (known as "Medicare buy-in").

In an instant, both ideas were vaporized. Liberals outside the Senate excoriated Lieberman as a traitor and a hypocrite, noting that he once advocated allowing people older than 55 to buy in to Medicare.

But inside the Senate, Lieberman's colleagues were not as harsh — at least, not

on the record; you never know when you're going to need a 60th vote.

In fact, Lieberman may have done his colleagues a favor. Several centrist Democrats weren't happy about the public option or Medicare buy-in either. Neither proposal was likely to attract 60 votes, even if Lieberman had stayed in the fold.

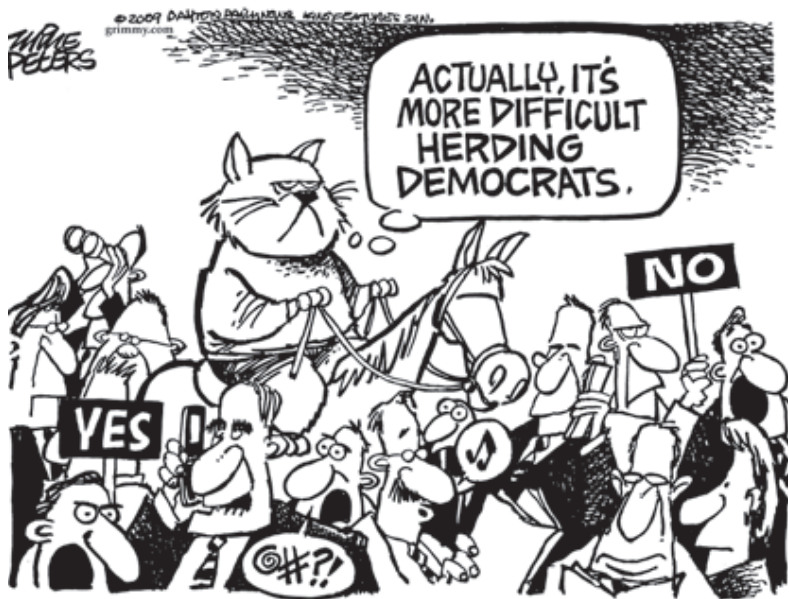
In effect, Lieberman volunteered for the role of scapegoat (intentionally or not), taking the blame for shooting down liberal ideas that were already doomed. At any rate, by the end of the week, he was promising to help Reid move a rejiggered bill forward.

The second holdout was Ben Nelson of Nebraska, a taciturn former insurance executive from a solidly conservative state. (Republican presidential nominee John McCain won Nebraska with 57 percent of the vote last year.) Nelson votes with Republicans more often than any other Democrat (even Lieberman), and he warned colleagues long ago that he would insist on tough provisions barring any federally funded insurance policies from covering abortions before a health care bill could win his vote.

Reid deputized Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, another anti-abortion Democrat, to work out a compromise — essentially to allow women in those plans to pay for abortion coverage with their own funds — but Nelson warned that he would be a tough sell. The Nebraskan said he would submit any abortion proposal to his "constituency groups" — anti-abortion organizations that are opposed to any form of compromise.

And even if he got his way on abortion, Nelson warned, he wasn't sure he would vote to move the bill forward — leaving Reid still uncertain where he would find his 60th vote.

Which revived the name of the third "60th senator," a moderate Republican, Olympia Snowe of Maine. Snowe has worked for months on health care legislation, says she wants to pass something and broke with her party to vote in favor of a bill drafted by the Senate Finance Committee. Obama and his aides have lavished private attention on her, knowing that her single vote would give them the right to anoint the result as "bipartisan."



But Snowe has a flaw: She's serious about the substance of health care. All week long, as Reid struggled to find a way to amass 60 votes among Democrats, he kept his version of the bill under wraps, to maximize his negotiating room. Snowe said she might be willing to vote for a bill — but she would have to see it first, and let it be analyzed, and think about it awhile. That meant: not before Christmas.

So Friday, Reid went back to Nelson, who finally said yes — as long as states were given the right to prohibit plans from covering abortion and as long as Nebraska got a special deal on the cost of expanding Medicaid coverage to the poor.

Meanwhile, the rest of the Republican caucus, which took a walk from the Democrats' bill last summer, had a much easier task: obstruction and delay.

They handled their role expertly, demanding that the Senate clerk read the full text of a 700-page amendment aloud, threatening to torpedo a defense funding bill that they actually favor and generally

making Democrats miserable.

As a result, Reid's "optimistic" timetable had the Senate passing the bill at 7 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

Several Democrats, meanwhile, including Rockefeller and, yes, Lieberman, have proposed expanding programs that would test new models for health care delivery and payment — alternatives to the costly and inefficient "fee for service" model that pays doctors for individual medical procedures instead of patients' overall health care.

That's one reason Rockefeller, a thoroughgoing liberal, favors passing whatever bill can attract 60 votes; he sees this year's legislation — which already has become next year's legislation — as the beginning of a longer process.

"You never get everything that you want," he said. "You try to keep improving the bill, and you do it next year or the year after."

Doyle McManus is a Los Angeles Times columnist.

Aid for long-term care comes with too much risk

Washington Post editorial

An estimated 10 million elderly and disabled Americans need some sort of long-term care and help with the tasks of daily living. That number will grow as America ages. But the only federal program that pays for such services is Medicaid: Individuals who need long-term care have to spend down their assets to become poor enough to qualify. So does it make sense to establish a federal program under which people could buy long-term care insurance? Does it make sense to do this within the context of health reform? The House and Senate proposals contain such a program. We are sympathetic to the need but have doubts about its advisability.

The program, known as the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act, would be an innovative, voluntary insurance program run by the federal government. Employers could choose to have workers automatically enrolled unless they opt out, and premiums would be deducted from their paychecks. After paying in for five years, they would be entitled, if they become disabled, to a cash benefit

— at least \$50 a day — to pay for the non-medical services they need to remain at home rather than going to a nursing home. The premiums and benefits are required to be set at a level that will ensure the program is actuarially sound for 75 years.

Sounds good, yet there are serious concerns about whether the program will

work — or whether, because of low participation rates that would leave it mostly enrolling sicker people, it will end up having to set premiums so high or offer benefits so skimpy that lawmakers will be moved to bail it out. The Obama administration says not. ... But both the Congressional Budget Office and the chief actuary for the Medi-

care program have expressed misgivings. ...

There are already enough risks and uncertainties in health reform. Long-term care is an important topic, but it is one that deserves more careful scrutiny than has taken place in the context of the broader health-reform debate.

Prickly City



By SCOTT STANTIS

It seems like yesterday the world heralded the start of a new millennium while fearing the onslaught of the Y2K bug. So much has happened since in a decade that produced some of the most extraordinary events in memory.

The Associated Press is examining the Aughts, the Zeros — whatever you want to call a decade that reached its low

toward the start, on Sept. 11, 2001, and has since pirouetted through wars and social networking, a roller-coaster economy and the election of the first black U.S. president.

TODAY:

PHOTOGRAPHY



2000: U.S. agents find 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez on April 22 in Miami. The subject of a passionate international custody debate, Elian was ordered returned to his father in Cuba after his mother died en route to the U.S. Now 16, Elian still lives in Cuba and appears occasionally with Fidel Castro. **2001:** A person falls from the north tower of the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. The image, taken by photographer Richard Drew, has inspired a documentary, innumerable magazine articles investigating its subject, and the 2007 Don DeLillo book, "The Falling Man." Of the nearly 3,000 deaths that day, some news sources estimate at least 200 were victims who fell as the towers burned. **2002:** Searchlights shine into the sky above lower Manhattan on March 11 to mark the six-month anniversary of the terrorist attacks. The lights shine every year on the anniversary of the attack to mark the space where the Twin Towers stood. **2003:** Pfc. Lynndie England holds a leash attached to a detainee in late 2003 at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. The photos and the acts they depicted were a scar on the U.S. military's presence in Iraq. England was one of 11 convicted of crimes for their roles in the abuse. She was released from prison in March 2007 after serving 18 months. **2004:** Karl Nilsson of Lulea, Sweden, poses with a sign saying his parents and brothers were missing on Dec. 28 in Phuket, Thailand. Karl's parents were swept

out to sea when a tsunami struck their beach hotel. Ne people were killed in the Indian Ocean, and Indonesia fected nations are still rebuilding. **2005:** Travelers are ground train in a tunnel near Kings Cross station in London provided by commuter Alexander Chadwick, taken on H people, including the four bombers, were killed in the a system. **2006:** A Jewish settler struggles with an Isra clashes that erupted as authorities evacuated the West of Amona, east of the Palestinian town of Ramallah, troops clashed with hundreds of stone-throwing Jewish barbed wire and on rooftops in the illegal West Bank se Israeli court cleared the way for the demolition of nine h A victim is carried out of Virginia Tech's Norris Hall o Seung-Hui Cho killed 32 people in the deadliest schoo **2008:** Visiting Germany during his presidential campai waves to an estimated 200,000 people at the Victory o Passengers of US Airways Flight 1549 wait to be resc plane after an emergency landing in the Hudson River

APHY



2001



2003



2004



2005



2006



2008



2007



2009

early a quarter of a million
in, Sri Lanka and other af-
evacuated from an under-
don on July 7, in an image
his mobile phone. Fifty-six
attacks on London's transit
Israeli security officer during
Bank settlement outpost
on Feb. 1. Thousands of
settlers holed up behind
settlement outpost after an
homes at the site. **2007:**
on April 16 after gunman
shooting in U.S. history.
gn July 24, Barack Obama
Column in Berlin. **2009:**
ued on the wings of their
in New York on Jan. 15.

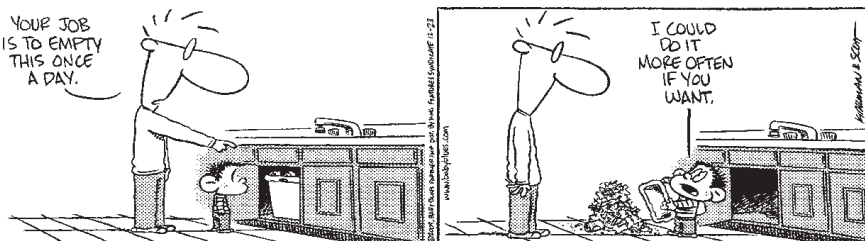
Frazz



Garfield



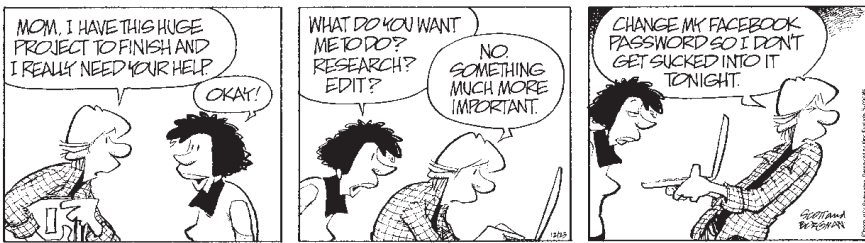
Baby Blues



Jump Start



Zits



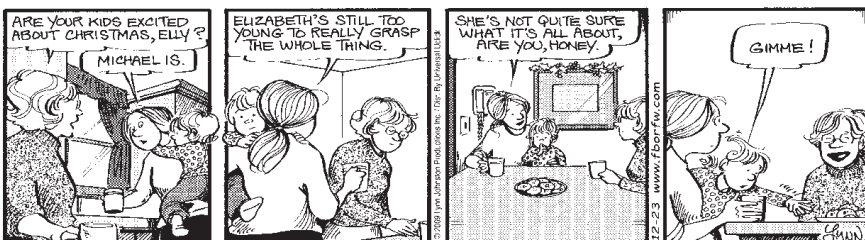
Red & Rover



Hagar



Better or Worse



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19				20					
			21		22	23		24		25	26	27
28	29	30					31		32			
33				34				35		36		
37			38		39				40			
41				42		43						
			44		45			46		47	48	49
50	51	52				53	54			55		
56						57				58		
59						60				61		

ACROSS

- 1 Massachusetts cape
- 4 Eager
- 8 React in horror
- 12 Lawyers' org.
- 13 Baseball team
- 14 Church section
- 15 Part of HRH, at times
- 16 "The Clue in the Crossword Cipher" solver
- 18 Asian leader who inspired a jacket style
- 20 Small barrel
- 21 "Oh, woe!"
- 24 Antitoxin
- 28 Tapped
- 32 Ripped
- 33 Tatter
- 34 Binge
- 36 Past
- 37 Bit for Fermi
- 39 Patron of Scotland
- 41 Foundation
- 43 Not pizzicato
- 44 Slight application
- 46 Friars Club honor
- 50 "The Price Is Right" host
- 55 Scrooge's cry
- 56 Tittle
- 57 Unmacho type
- 58 Work with
- 59 Vacillate

DOWN

- 60 Lummock
- 61 "Honor — father ..."
- 26 Incite
- 27 Cat call
- 28 Hardly colorful
- 29 — -tat-tat
- 30 Hollywood clashers
- 31 Approach
- 35 Put into code
- 38 Carnival area
- 40 Scooby- —
- 42 Pouch
- 45 Cry loudly
- 47 Touch
- 48 Obi or cummerbund
- 49 Yon folks
- 50 Insult
- 51 Tier
- 52 Greek vowel
- 53 "Flying Down to —"
- 54 Ostrich's cousin

Answer to Previous Puzzle

H	A	J	J		S	K	I	P		P	S	I
A	L	A	I		U	N	T	O		O	A	R
D	I	R	T		P	O	O	L		O	F	A
				N	E	S	T		E	L	L	E
W	I	S	E	S			A	M	O	S		
A	S	H	Y		F	A	M	I	S	H	E	D
D	N	A		M	A	G	I	C		A	P	E
S	T	R	E	A	K	E	D		C	R	E	E
				K	L	E	E			M	A	K
Y	E	T	I	S			O	U	R	S		
O	V	A		T	A	N	K	S		S	U	I
D	E	N		R	I	C	E		A	C	H	E
A	R	K		O	R	E	S		L	Y	O	N

12-23

CRYPTOQUIP

KE C BIMQSCCKQ IE FTVCSG
BKQSD JVTV FVKQY GCMWVU
KQ JCYIQD, IQV RIMWU
RCWW SGCS C SKR SCR SIJ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NOT GETTING ENOUGH SUN OR VITAMIN D, I HEARD SOME LEAPING INSECTS DEVELOPED CRICKETS' RICKETS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals T

AFN Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on AFN's Web site at www.myafn.net

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2009

	AFN/prime Atlantic	AFN/family	AFN/movie	AFN/news	AFN/prime Pacific	PENTAGON	AFN/spectrum	AFN/sports	AFN/xtra
15:00	NBC Nightly News	Funniest Home Videos	(:05) Movie "Christmas With the Kranks" (2004, Comedy) Tim Allen, Jamie Lee Curtis, Dan Aykroyd.	Your World With Neil Cavuto	Days of our Lives	AFN Europe Report	Design Remix	NFL PrimeTime	NFL Gameday
15:30	World News-Gibson	Planet's Funniest Animals				EXchange on Air	Curb Appeal		
16:00	Sesame Street	(3:50) Pokémon		The Rachel Maddow Show	Oprah Winfrey	Fit For Duty	MythBusters Bullet dropped vs. fired.	SportsCenter	
16:30		(:40) Zatch Bell				Battleground			ESPNEWS
17:00	The View	The Fairly OddParents	Movie Mob	Around the Services	Wheel of Fortune	Today's Air Force	King of the Hill	NBA Basketball Cleveland Cavaliers at Phoenix Suns. From US Airways Center in Phoenix. (Same-day Tape)	X Play
17:30		Teenage Mutant Ninja	At the Movies	Tavis Smiley	Jeopardy!	Recon	That '70s Show		Yo Momma
18:00	Dr. Phil	America's Children's Holiday Parade	Hollywood Dailies	Nightly Business Report	World News-Gibson	Around the Services	Two and a Half Men		The Simpsons
18:30			Entertainment Tonight	Nightline	Around the Services	Downrange	Two and a Half Men		Family Guy
19:00	The Dr. Oz Show	Frosty the Snowman	Movie "The Christmas Card" (2006, Romance) Ed Asner, John Newton.	The O'Reilly Factor	NUMB3RS "Animal Rites"	Week-Pentagon	Christmas in Washington 2009		WWE Tribute to the Troops From Baghdad, Iraq.
19:30		Charlie Brown Christmas				FNG Useful benefits.		ESPNEWS	
20:00	Access Hollywood	Movie "Christmas in Wonderland" (2007, Comedy) Matthew Knight, Chris Kattan, Cameron Bright.	(:45) Movie "A Christmas Visitor" (2002, Drama) William Devane, Meredith Baxter, Reagan Pasternak.	Countdown With Keith Olbermann	48 Hours Mystery "The Godfather's Daughter"	Briefing Encore	Lie to Me "Love Always"	SportsCenter	WWE Monday Night RAW With Michael Cole and Jerry Lawler.
20:30	The King of Queens			Today	The Jay Leno Show	Battleground	Castle "Always Buy Retail"	NFL Football New York Giants at Washington Redskins. Longtime rivals clash when the Giants visit the Redskins in an NFC East matchup. (Same-day Tape)	
21:00	The Young and the Restless					Recon Revisited			
21:30						Fit For Duty			
22:00	General Hospital	Touched by an Angel "An Angel on My Tree"	Movie "Phone Booth" (2002, Suspense) Colin Farrell, Kiefer Sutherland.	Today	Pacific Report	Around the Services	Seinfeld		SportsNation Colin Cowherd and Michelle Beadle.
22:30					The Tonight Show With Conan O'Brien	Pacific Report	Friends		
23:00	Days of our Lives	7th Heaven "Christmas"		America's Newsroom		Briefing Encore	Two and a Half Men		Attack of the Show!
23:30					Late Show W/Letterman	USARJ This Week	Two and a Half Men		

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2009

00:00	Oprah Winfrey	Frosty the Snowman	(:10) Movie "The Godfather, Part II" (1974, Crime Drama) Al Pacino, Robert Duvall, Diane Keaton. The saga of the Corleone crime family continues.	Newsroom	Late Show W/Letterman	The Grill Sergeants	Late Night With Jimmy Fallon	NFL Total Access	MTV Hits Playlist
00:30		A Charlie Brown Christmas			The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson	Downrange			
1:00	Wheel of Fortune	Movie "Christmas in Wonderland" (2007) Matthew Knight. Kids find a sack of counterfeit money in a Canadian mall.		MSNBC Live	This Week in the Pentagon	Top Chef The field of contestants is narrowed down.		SportsCenter	X Play
1:30	Jeopardy!				Judge Judy	Fit For Duty			Yo Momma
2:00	Headline News			Happening Now	Hell's Kitchen "6 Chefs" The two teams create their menu.	Recon	Supernatural "Providence"	SportsCenter	The Simpsons
2:30	ATS/AFN Report					Around the Services			Family Guy
3:00	NUMB3RS The team investigates the death of a professor.	Touched by an Angel "An Angel on My Tree"		Newsroom	Oprah Winfrey	Downrange	Close to Home "Escape"	NFL Football New York Giants at Washington Redskins. Longtime rivals clash when the Giants visit the Redskins in an NFC East matchup.	WWE Tribute to the Troops
3:30						Today's Air Force			
4:00	48 Hours Mystery Gotti family talks about life inside the mob.	7th Heaven "Christmas"	Movie "The Christmas Card" (2006, Romance) Ed Asner, John Newton, Alice Evans.	MSNBC Live	Dr. Phil	Recon Revisited	Seinfeld "Cigar Store Indian"		WWE Monday Night RAW With Michael Cole and Jerry Lawler.
4:30						State Dept Briefing	Friends		
5:00	The Jay Leno Show	Teletubbies "Carol Singing"	(:15) Movie "A Christmas Visitor" (2002) William Devane. A stranger brings joy to members of a grief-stricken family.	Studio B With Shepard Smith	Final Score	Battleground	Namaste Yoga		
5:30		Rolie Polie Olie			Headline News	Around the Services	Total Body Sculpt With Gilad		
6:00	Headline News	Elmo's World: Happy Holidays!		The Situation Room With Wolf Blitzer	Good Morning America	Army Newswatch	Giada at Home	NFL Live	SportsNation Colin Cowherd and Michelle Beadle.
6:30	The Tonight Show With Conan O'Brien			Glenn Beck	Good Morning America	This Week in the Pentagon	Cooking-Sandra Lee	Jim Rome Is Burning	Attack of the Show!
7:00		Bear in the Big Blue House	Movie Mob			Downrange	El News Entertainment news.	Around the Horn	
7:30	Late Show With David Letterman	Blue's Clues	At the Movies			Around the Services	The Daily 10	Pardon the Interruption	
8:00		Dora the Explorer	Hollywood Dailies	Around the Services	Sesame Street	Briefing Encore	ER Pratt tries to make up with his brother.	SportsCenter	MTV Hits Playlist
8:30	The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson	Ni Hao, Kai-Lan	Entertainment Tonight	NBC Nightly News		FNG Useful benefits.			ESPNEWS
9:00		The Backyardigans	Movie "More Than Meets the Eye: The Joan Brock Story" (2003) Carey Lowell.	World News-Gibson	The View	Fit For Duty	Desperate Housewives "Everybody Says Don't"		
9:30	Judge Judy	LazyTown "Surprise Santa"		CBS Evening News		Around the Services		College Football Live	ESPNEWS
10:00	Hell's Kitchen "6 Chefs" The two teams create their menu.	Peep and Big Wide		The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer	Dr. Phil	Recon Revisited	Grey's Anatomy Izzie gets a surprise visit from her mother.	College Football MAACO Bowl Las Vegas - BYU vs. Oregon State. From Las Vegas. (Live)	NHL Hockey San Jose Sharks at Chicago Blackhawks. From the United Center in Chicago. (Live)
10:30		Super Why!	(:45) Movie "Shoot to Kill" (1988, Action) Sidney Poitier, Tom Berenger, Kirstie Alley. An FBI agent trails a killer who has taken a hostage.	Hannity	The Dr. Oz Show	Fit For Duty	Judge Judy		
11:00	Oprah Winfrey	A Very Playhouse Disney Holiday Holiday celebration				AFN Europe Report	Judge Alex		
11:30						Recon	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation "Burden of Proof"		
12:00	Dr. Phil	Phineas and Ferb		Anderson Cooper 360	Access Hollywood	Fit For Duty	Challenge		NHL Hockey Nashville Predators at Vancouver Canucks. From General Motors Place in Vancouver, B.C. (Live)
12:30		Phineas and Ferb			The King of Queens	Battleground		SportsCenter	
13:00	CBS Evening News	Phineas and Ferb	(:25) Movie "Steel Magnolias" (1989) Sally Field. Six iron-willed women gather at a Louisiana beauty parlor.	Special Report With Bret Baier	The Young and the Restless	Around the Services			
13:30	ESPNEWS	Phineas and Ferb		Campbell Brown	General Hospital	Briefing Encore	Emeril Live		
14:00	The FOX Report With Shepard Smith	Phineas and Ferb				Downrange			
14:30		Phineas and Ferb							
15:00	NBC Nightly News	Amer. Funniest Home Videos	Movie "Christmas in Canaan" (2009, Drama) Billy Ray Cyrus, Zak Ludwig, Jaishon Fisher.	Your World With Neil Cavuto	Days of our Lives	AFN Europe Report	Ground Breakers	SportsCenter	Hot Stove
15:30	World News-Gibson	Planet's Funniest Animals				Recon	Color Splash		
16:00	Sesame Street	(3:50) Pokémon		The Rachel Maddow Show	Oprah Winfrey	Fit For Duty	MythBusters "Duct Tape Hour" Trio of duct tape myths.	SportsCenter	NFL Total Access
16:30		(:40) Zatch Bell				Battleground			
17:00	The View	(:05) The Fairly OddParents	Behind the Scenes	Around the Services	Wheel of Fortune	The American Veteran	King of the Hill	College Basketball Michigan State at Texas. (Same-day Tape)	X Play
17:30		Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Entertainment Studios.com	Tavis Smiley	Jeopardy!	Recon Revisited	That '70s Show		Yo Momma
18:00	Dr. Phil	SpongeBob SquarePants	Hollywood Dailies	Nightly Business Report	World News-Gibson	Around the Services	Two and a Half Men		The Simpsons
18:30		All Grown Up	Entertainment Tonight	Nightline	Around the Services	Downrange	Two and a Half Men		Family Guy
19:00	The Dr. Oz Show	Little Drummer Boy	Movie "Blades of Glory" (2007, Comedy) Will Ferrell, Jon Heder, Will Arnett. Rival male skaters compete as a pair.	The O'Reilly Factor	American Dad "Jack's Back"	Fit. Hood on Track	Happy Holidays With the US Air Force Academy Band	College Basketball California at Kansas. (Same-day Tape)	Jesse James Is a Dead Man "Baja 500" Baja 500.
19:30		Charlie Brown			Family Guy "Stew-Roids"	Today's Air Force			Run's House
20:00	Access Hollywood	Movie "The Velveteen Rabbit" (2007, Adventure) Jane Seymour, Voices of Tom Skerritt, Ellen Burstyn.		Countdown With Keith Olbermann	Hawthorne "No Guts, No Glory"	Briefing Encore	Southern Belles: Louisville "Life's Ups and Downs"		Harlem Heights
20:30	The King of Queens					Fit For Duty			
21:00	The Young and the Restless		(:50) Movie "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (1989, Comedy) Chevy Chase.	Today	The Jay Leno Show	Battleground	The Mentalist "Red Handed"	SportsCenter	Making the Band 4
21:30						Recon			
22:00	General Hospital	Touched by an Angel "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"		Today	Pacific Report	Around the Services	Seinfeld "The Conversion"	NFL Replay	SportsNation Colin Cowherd and Michelle Beadle.
22:30			(:35) Movie "Four Christmases" (2008) Vince Vaughn, Reese Witherspoon, Robert Duvall.		The Tonight Show With Conan O'Brien	Pacific Report	Friends		Attack of the Show!
23:00	Days of our Lives	Touched by an Angel "The Christmas Watch"		America's Newsroom		Briefing Encore	Two and a Half Men		
23:30					Late Show W/Letterman	This Week in the Pentagon	Two and a Half Men	NFL Replay	

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2009

00:00	Oprah Winfrey	Little Drummer Boy	(10:35) Four Christmases	Newsroom	Late Show W/Letterman	Tour of Duty	Late Night With Jimmy Fallon	(11:30) NFL Replay	MTV Hits Playlist
00:30		Charlie Brown	(:20) Movie "Scarface" (1983, Crime Drama) Al Pacino, Michelle Pfeiffer, Steven Bauer. A Cuban immigrant fights to the top of Miami's drug trade.		The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson	Downrange			
1:00	Wheel of Fortune	Movie "The Velveteen Rabbit" (2007, Adventure) Jane Seymour, Voices of Tom Skerritt, Ellen Burstyn.		MSNBC Live	Judge Judy	EXchange on Air	Cane "A New Legacy" Club investors beat up Henry.	SportsCenter	X Play
1:30	Jeopardy!					Fit For Duty			Yo Momma
2:00	Headline News			Happening Now	Hell's Kitchen "5 Chefs"	Today's Air Force	Ghost Whisperer "Life on the Line"	SportsCenter	The Simpsons
2:30	ATS/AFN Report					Around the Services			Family Guy
3:00	American Dad "Jack's Back"	Touched by an Angel "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"	(:25) Movie "Blades of Glory" (2007) Will Ferrell. Rival male skaters compete as a pair.	Newsroom	Oprah Winfrey	Downrange	Psych "Daredevil!"	College Football MAACO Bowl Las Vegas - BYU vs. Oregon State. From Las Vegas.	Jesse James Is a Dead Man "Baja 500" Baja 500.
3:30	Family Guy "Stew-Roids"					This Week in the Pentagon			Run's House
4:00	Hawthorne "No Guts, No Glory"	Touched by an Angel "The Christmas Watch"		MSNBC Live	Dr. Phil	The Grill Sergeants	Seinfeld "The Conversion"		Harlem Heights
4:30						State Dept Briefing	Friends		
5:00	The Jay Leno Show	Teletubbies "Snowy Day"	(:15) Movie "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation"	Studio B With Shepard Smith	Final Score	Battleground	Namaste Yoga		Making the Band 4
5:30		Blue's Clues			Headline News	Around the Services	Total Body Sculpt With Gilad		

News

Sports

Weather

MIDDLE EAST HEADLINES

Alleged serial rapist barred from work at U.S. bases in

SCOREBOARD

Pacific scoreboard for the April 8 edition

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COMMERCIAL PRINTING:

COMMERCIAL PRINTING:

Broncos brought down by a horse-collar tackle

By ARNIE STAPLETON
The Associated Press

DENVER — JaMarcus Russell and Chaz Schilens hooked up for the winning touchdown in the final minute to give the Oakland Raiders a victory made possible by nickel back Stanford Routt's save earlier in the fourth quarter.

Brandon Stokley was about to score the game-clinching touchdown for Denver when he hauled in a 63-yard pass-and-run with the Broncos leading 16-13. Routt corralled the speedy receiver with an illegal horse-collar tackle at the Raiders 4, however, preventing the score.

"I just had to go get him. You never let somebody just run into the end zone, you know what I mean? You never do that," Routt said after the Raiders' 20-19 victory Sunday. "I just grabbed him and tried to bring him down. I didn't know it was illegal. I mean I didn't hurt him or nothing. I grabbed his neck and he came down."

The infraction, usually a 15-yarder, only moved the ball half the distance to the goal line.

For the Broncos (8-6), those two remaining yards might as well have been a mile.

Denver has scored touchdowns on just half of its 22 first-and-

goal situations and, sure enough, couldn't get to the goal line again, settling instead for Matt Prater's fourth field goal and a 19-13 lead with six minutes remaining.

"You get down there, you've got to score a touchdown," Stokley said. "Those end up coming back and costing you the game."

It did, when Russell found redemption and Schilens in the end zone with 35 seconds left.

"They're all special, but this one's pretty high," said Russell, the former No. 1 overall draft pick who was benched a month ago and passed over in favor of Charlie Frye on the depth chart this week following a double-knee injury to starter Bruce Gradkowski.

Russell will go back to the bench if Frye recovers from slamming his head on the ground after a hard hit from linebacker Andra Davis early in the fourth quarter Sunday.

Frye was 9-for-17 for 68 yards and an interception, plus a 26-yard scamper on his only keeper. Russell was 5-for-11 for 47 yards.

"We'll have to sort through the bodies on the way home and we'll decide," said Raiders coach Tom Cable, who even sent in newly signed J.P. Losman for a snap when Russell was knocked woozy on the winning drive.

The Broncos are sorting through their own troubles.

They were sitting pretty in the AFC wild-card race before Sunday but now find themselves answering questions about poor play-calling, bad execution, missed tackles, bad blitz pickups, you name it.

"We've got a great kicker in Matt Prater but he shouldn't have to score all the points in the game," tight end Tony Scheffler lamented. "I feel pretty empty right now. It's tough. But we've got two games to make the play-offs and kind of control our own destiny, to use that cliché. But we've got to pick things up."

The Raiders (5-9) delivered a devastating blow to the Broncos' playoff hopes with their second straight victory in Denver. Now, the Broncos figure they're going to have to win at Philadelphia next Sunday.

"We have no margin for error," defensive end Vonnie Holliday said. "The sense of urgency was supposed to be today. And unfortunately it wasn't."

The Broncos were outgained on the ground 241 yards to 80, with Michael Bush gashing Denver for 133 yards on 18 carries and Darren McFadden gaining 74 yards on a dozen handoffs.



JACK DEMPSEY/AP

Oakland's Chaz Schilens celebrates his 10-yard touchdown reception that gave the Raiders a 20-19 victory over the Denver Broncos.

NFL roundup

Ho-hum, Eagles clinch yet another berth in NFL playoffs

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — For the Philadelphia Eagles, making the playoffs is a ho-hum accomplishment.

Donovan McNabb threw for one touchdown and ran for one and DeSean Jackson had 140 yards receiving as the Eagles beat the San Francisco 49ers 27-13 on Sunday to clinch a playoff spot for the eighth time this decade.

The Eagles are still waiting for their first Super Bowl victory, so anything less isn't worth much of a celebration for a team that has reached the NFC championship game five times in eight seasons.

"It's not that we're not excited," fullback Leonard Weaver said. "It's something that we expect. As players, and as a team, we expect to go to the playoffs. That's the standard that we hold ourselves to, so we're happy, but we know the work is not done. The work is not done until we reach the ultimate goal."

The Eagles (10-4) have won five straight and have a one-game lead over Dallas in the NFC East. Philadelphia visits the Cowboys in two weeks. The Eagles still have a chance for a first-round bye if they win out and Minnesota (11-3) loses one game.

San Francisco's loss gave Ari-

zona its second straight NFC West title.

The start of the game was pushed back three hours because the city was still recovering from its second-largest snowfall since records began in 1884. A total of 23.2 inches of snow fell in Philadelphia on Saturday.

It didn't seem that bad inside the stadium until some fans started throwing snow in the fourth quarter. Once LeSean McCoy scored on a 2-yard TD run to put the Eagles ahead 27-13, a few of the frozen die-hards celebrated by tossing snow in the air. Some fans mixed in snowballs aimed at 49ers fans, but they stopped when a warning was flashed on the video screen.

Frank Gore ran for 107 yards, becoming the first player in 24 games to surpass 100 yards against the Eagles. But the 49ers (6-8) couldn't overcome three interceptions off Alex Smith.

McNabb, 21-for-36 for 306 yards, threw two interceptions for just the second time this season.

"There were throws I definitely want back," McNabb said. "It was uncharacteristic of myself, tried to force the ball."

With San Francisco down 20-3 at halftime, the 49ers scored 10 quick points to get close. Josh Morgan returned the second-half

kickoff 52 yards, but the offense couldn't capitalize and Joe Nedney kicked a 25-yard field goal.

Then Dre' Bly intercepted McNabb's cross-body pass into double coverage. This time, the Niners took advantage. Smith connected with Morgan on a 12-yard pass to cut it to 20-13.

The Eagles drove 89 yards and went ahead 27-13 on McCoy's 2-yard run early in the fourth period. McNabb's 59-yard pass to Jackson on third-and-2 kept the drive going.

McNabb hit Jackson for a 19-yard TD to put Philadelphia ahead 7-0 on the opening possession. It was the shortest of Jackson's 11 TDs this season. He shares the NFL record with eight scores of at least 50 yards, including two punt returns and one rush.

"It's a challenge for me to go out there and still have people focusing on me the way they do," Jackson said. "It's a good challenge for myself and the team to be able to still go out there and make things happen."

Nedney kicked a 51-yard field goal on the first 49ers possession.

Coming off an impressive victory over Arizona on Monday night, the 49ers were sluggish following a short week and cross-country flight. The Eagles weren't too sharp, either.

"Obviously it was not our best performance," 49ers coach Mike Singletary said. "We came out here to play a different game and do all the things we had to do to get it done and we didn't get it done."

After Sheldon Brown stripped the ball from Delanie Walker and Asante Samuel recovered at the 6, McNabb drove the Eagles 94 yards in nine plays. He scored on a nifty run from the 8 to make it 14-3.

Samuel intercepted Smith's pass on San Francisco's next possession and his 18-yard return to the Niners 28 set up a 22-yard field goal by David Akers.

Ravens 31, Bears 7: Joe Flacco threw a career-high four touchdown passes, and the Ravens capitalized on six Chicago turnovers.

Baltimore (8-6) led 14-0 after 13 minutes and 31-7 after three quarters. The victory solidified the Ravens' hold on the sixth and final playoff spot in the AFC and improved their record against teams currently with losing records to 6-0.

Jay Cutler threw three interceptions, upping his NFL-high total to 25, and backup Caleb Hanie was also picked off. In addition, the Bears (5-9) lost two fumbles.

Chicago's only score came on a 49-yard punt return by Earl Bennett.

Flacco was 21-for-29 for 234 yards with two TD passes to Todd Heap and one apiece to Demetrius Williams and Derrick Mason. Ray Rice ran for 77 yards in the first quarter and finished with 87.

Cutler was 10-for-27 for 94 yards for the Bears, who have lost six of seven overall and five straight on the road.

Buccaneers 24, Seahawks 7: Rookie Josh Freeman shook off his ninth interception in just over two games to throw two touchdown passes in the second half.

Visiting Tampa Bay's 26th-ranked defense forced five turnovers by Seattle quarterback Matt Hasselbeck as the Buccaneers (2-12) won for just the second time in 17 games.

With maybe 500 angry Seattle fans watching by the end, the Bucs triumphantly pointed to the sky after the team's first victory away from Tampa in 10 tries, since Nov. 23, 2008, at Detroit.

Freeman completed 16 of 26 passes for 205 yards, after starting 2-for-6 with an interception.

Hasselbeck had his first four-interception game in over five years and the second of his career.

NFL scoreboard

American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	365	244
Miami	7	7	0	.500	316	333
N.Y. Jets	7	7	0	.500	282	221
Buffalo	5	9	0	.357	225	288

x-Indianapolis	14	0	0	1.000	394	248
Jacksonville	7	7	0	.500	266	322
Tennessee	7	7	0	.500	320	347
Houston	7	7	0	.500	327	286

Cincinnati	9	5	0	.643	288	244
Baltimore	6	8	0	.429	330	250
Pittsburgh	7	7	0	.500	315	280
Cleveland	3	11	0	.214	199	349

x-San Diego	11	3	0	.786	389	283
Denver	8	6	0	.571	275	250
Oakland	5	9	0	.357	175	335
Kansas City	3	11	0	.214	240	383

National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Philadelphia	10	4	0	.714	399	286
Dallas	9	5	0	.643	320	250
N.Y. Giants	7	6	0	.538	341	330
Washington	4	9	0	.308	234	251

x-New Orleans	13	1	0	.929	483	298
Atlanta	7	7	0	.500	312	312
Carolina	6	8	0	.429	251	289
Tampa Bay	2	12	0	.143	214	363

x-Minnesota	11	3	0	.786	396	269
Green Bay	9	5	0	.643	380	280
Chicago	5	9	0	.357	254	322
Detroit	2	12	0	.143	233	437

x-Arizona	9	5	0	.643	337	282
San Francisco	6	8	0	.429	282	269
Seattle	5	9	0	.357	257	325
St. Louis	1	13	0	.071	159	377

x-clinched division
y-clinched playoff spot

Thursday's games

Indianapolis 35, Jacksonville 31

Saturday's games

Dallas 24, New Orleans 17

Sunday's games

Tennessee 27, Miami 24, OT

Arizona 10, N.Y. Jets 7

Houston 16, St. Louis 13

New England 17, Buffalo 10

Cleveland 41, Kansas City 34

Oakland 20, Denver 19

San Diego 27, Cincinnati 24

Baltimore 31, Chicago 7

Tampa Bay 24, Seattle 36

Pittsburgh 37, Green Bay 36

Philadelphia 27, San Francisco 13

Carolina 26, Minnesota 7

N.Y. Giants at Washington

Friday, Dec. 25

San Diego at Tennessee

Sunday, Dec. 27

Buffalo at Atlanta

Houston at Miami

Seattle at Green Bay

Carolina at N.Y. Giants

Baltimore at Pittsburgh

Tampa Bay at New Orleans

Oakland at Cleveland

Kansas City at Cincinnati

Jacksonville at New England

Detroit at San Francisco

St. Louis at Arizona

N.Y. Jets at Indianapolis

Denver at Philadelphia

Dallas at Washington

Monday, Dec. 28

Minnesota at Chicago

Sunday

Cardinals 31, Lions 24

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	7	10	0	.413	31	41
Detroit	0	17	0	.000	24	34

First Quarter

Ari—Fitzgerald 1 pass from Warner (Nugent kick), 1:37.

Second Quarter

Ari—FG Nugent 48, 13:01.

Ari—Hightower 1 run (Nugent kick), 3:51.

Third Quarter

Det—Delmas 100 interception return (Hanson kick), 7:29.

Det—Morris 64 run (Hanson kick), 5:10.

Det—FG Hanson 37, 2:04.

Fourth Quarter

Ari—B.Wells 18 run (Nugent kick), 13:40.

Det—Stanton 1 run (Hanson kick), 3:48.

Ari—Baldin 5 pass from Warner (Nugent kick), 1:54.

A—40,577.

	Ari	Det
First downs	21	15
Total Net Yards	340	282
Rushes-yards	26-117	27-161
Passing	223	121
Punt Returns	4-5	5-34
Kickoff Returns	4-93	6-154
Interceptions Ret.	2-21	1-100
Comp-Att-Int	23-37-1	16-31-2
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-10	2-15
Fumbles-Lost	7-50,3	5-39,2
Penalties-Yards	8-65	7-45
Time of Possession	29:43	30:17

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing—Arizona, B.Wells 17-110.

Wright 1-5, Hightower 6-4, Warner 2-(minus 2).

Detroit, Morris 17-126, Felton 4-12.

Stanton 3-10, Brown 2-9, Culpepper 1-4.

Passing—Arizona, Warner 23-37-1-233.

Detroit, Stanton 10-19-1-72, Culpepper 6-12-1-64.

Receiving—Arizona, Boldin 6-72.

Hightower 3-34, Fitzgerald 4-36, Breaston 3-38.

Detroit, Morris 5-35, C.Johnson 3-35.

Northcutt 2-30, B.Johnson 2-11, Heller 2-8.

Nordin 1-12, D.Williams 1-5.

Missed field goals—Detroit, Hanson 54 (WR).

Falcons 10, Jets 7

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	3	0	0	.750	7	10
N.Y. Jets	7	0	0	1.000	7	0

First Quarter

Atl—FG Bryant 24, 6:36.

NYJ—Edwards 65 pass from Sanchez (Feely kick), 2:48.

Fourth Quarter

Atl—Gonzalez 6 pass from Ryan (Bryant kick), 1:38.

A—76,866.

First downs 12

Total Net Yards 238

Rushes-yards 28-86

Passing 152

Punt Returns 1-8

Kickoff Returns 2-26

Interceptions Ret. 3-2

Comp-Att-Int 16-34-0

Sacked-Yards Lost 0-0

Punts 8-39,9

Fumbles-Lost 0-0

Penalties-Yards 4-25

Time of Possession 29:36

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing—Atlanta, Snelling 16-59.

Wood 9-22, Turner 1-7, Ryan 1-(minus 2).

N.Y. Jets, Jones 19-52, Greene 8-30, B.Smith 1-8.

Sanchez 3-7, Woodhead 1-2, Clemens 1-0.

Passing—Atlanta, Ryan 16-34-0-152.

N.Y. Jets, Sanchez 18-32-3-226.

Receiving—Atlanta, White 4-33, Gon-

zalez 3-32, Snelling 3-5, Norwood 2-47.

Mughelli 2-7, Jenkins 1-20, Booker 1-8.

N.Y. Jets, Cutchery 6-49, Edwards 5-105.

Keller 3-33, Woodhead 2-21, B.Smith 2-18.

Missed field goals—Atlanta, Bryant 48 (WL).

N.Y. Jets, Feely 38 (WR), 37 (BK).

Patriots 17, Bills 10

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	0	14	3	.000	17	10
Buffalo	3	0	0	1.000	10	17

First Quarter

Buf—FG Lindell 25, 5:36.

Second Quarter

NE—Moss 13 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 12:34.

NE—Maroney 1 run (Gostkowski kick), 12:4.

Third Quarter

NE—FG Gostkowski 30, 4:43.

Fourth Quarter

Buf—Evans 11 pass from Fitzpatrick (Lindell kick), 3:02.

A—70,000.

First downs 19

Total Net Yards 224

Rushes-yards 34-109

Passing 115

Punt Returns 2-17

Kickoff Returns 3-45

Interceptions Ret. 1-0

Comp-Att-Int 11-23-1

Sacked-Yards Lost 0-0

Punts 5-33,8

Fumbles-Lost 0-0

Penalties-Yards 6-52

Time of Possession 26:28

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing—New England, Maroney 23-81.

Morris 4-13, Faulk 1-7, Slater 1-6.

Welker 1-5, Brady 4-(minus 3).

Buffalo, Jackson 15-80, Lynch 8-25.

Passing—New England, Brady 11-23-1.

Buffalo, Fitzpatrick 17-25-1-178.

Edwards 1-2-0-(minus 1).

Receiving—New England, Moss 5-70.

Welker 4-40, Faulk 1-3, Morris 1-2.

Buffalo, Reed 4-63, Jackson 4-32, Nelson 4-17.

Evans 3-35, Owens 2-20, Parrish 1-10.

Missed field goals—Buffalo, Lindell 56 (WL).

Browns 41, Chiefs 34

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Cleveland	10	10	7	.441	41	34
Kansas City	3	21	0	.100	34	41

First Quarter

Cle—FG Dawson 47, 10:13.

KC—FG Succop 30, 4:12.

Cle—Cribbs 100 kickoff return (Dawson kick), 3:56.

Second Quarter

Cle—FG Dawson 30, 12:32.

KC—Chambers 9 pass from Cassel (Succop kick), 10:04.

KC—Charles 47 run (Succop kick), 4:10.

KC—Studebaker fumble recovery in end zone (Succop kick), 2:44.

Cle—Cribbs 103 kickoff return (Dawson kick), 2:31.

Third Quarter

Cle—J.Harrison 71 run (Dawson kick), 13:16.

Fourth Quarter

Cle—J.Harrison 8 run (Dawson kick), 12:09.

KC—FG Succop 27, 8:08.

KC—Bradley 12 pass from Cassel (Succop kick), 2:20.

Cle—J.Harrison 28 run (Dawson kick), 4:44.

A—53,315.

First downs 20

Total Net Yards 417

Rushes-yards 49-351

Passing 66

Punt Returns 5-40

Kickoff Returns 7-278

Interceptions Ret. 0-2

Comp-Att-Int 10-18-2

Sacked-Yards Lost 0-0

Punts 2-33,0

Fumbles-Lost 1-1

Penalties-Yards 3-20

Time of Possession 34:25

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing—Cleveland, J.Harrison 34-286.

Quinn 4-39, Jennings 7-18, Cribbs 3-8.

College basketball

Florida State stops Ga. Tech's streak

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Ryan Reid loved the game plan Florida State coach Leonard Hamilton designed to defend Georgia Tech.

Match size with size. Seal off passing lanes. Make the Yellow Jackets earn every shot.

"They have big strong guys," Reid said. "We couldn't let them dunk on us. When they get into the post, they're dangerous. They're a pretty good team."

Reid scored a career-high 17 points, and Chris Singleton hit the go-ahead basket with 1:05 left in overtime to help Florida State beat No. 22 Georgia Tech 66-59 on Sunday night.

The Seminoles (10-2, 1-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) won their fourth straight and stopped Georgia Tech's seven-game winning streak.

Hamilton was delighted that Reid, a senior power forward known mostly for his defense, gave Florida State an offensive boost.

"He is the only senior we have on this team," Hamilton said. "He's been our unsung hero for two or three years. He always seems to take the toughest defensive assignments and does all the dirty work."

Zachery Peacock scored 17 for the Yellow Jackets (8-2, 0-1 ACC). Mfon Udofia added 12 points, and Derrick Favors pulled down 12 rebounds as Georgia Tech lost its fourth straight ACC opener.

"We went into the game feeling like we had to score in transition before they could set up defensively, but we did not do that," Jackets coach Paul Hewitt said. "We shot early and quick in the first half. In the second half, we did a better job moving the ball around and getting some open shots."

Reid scored on Florida State's first two possessions of overtime before Singleton banked in a one-handed runner to make it 61-59 and put the Seminoles ahead to stay.

On his first overtime basket, Reid hit a 15-footer from the left baseline after Derwin Kitchen drove the lane and passed to his open teammate.

"I'm not being big-headed, but I've been working on that shot," Reid said. "It just went down."

Singleton missed his first eight shots from the field and finished 0-for-6 on three-point attempts.

Peacock, whose 17-footer forced a 54-54 tie with 33 seconds left in regulation, hit a three-pointer to begin OT and give the Yellow Jackets their first lead since his runner made it 37-36 at the 9:47 mark of the second half.

But Georgia Tech ended the game with a 32.9 percentage on 70 attempts from the field. Gani Lawal scored a season-low four points on 1-for-7 shooting, and Brian Oliver went 1-for-6 on three-point attempts.

Lawal began the game tied for the conference lead with a 10.4 rebounding average. He finished with four.

"We all know Gani is an outstanding player, and a couple of shots just didn't fall for him, and we were able to get enough guys around him," Hamilton said. "At times when he got the ball, we had about four or five guys around him, and that's because we have so much respect for him."

The 6-foot-10, 246-pound Favors couldn't do much against the Seminoles, either.

"They're a pretty long team, so I guess the guards couldn't see a way to get into the post," Favors said. "It did get frustrating a little bit, but you've got to move on to the next play."

The Yellow Jackets, who hit only eight of 26 shots from beyond the arc, are seeking their second winning record in the ACC in 10 seasons under Hewitt. The other was the 2003-04 team that advanced to the national title game.

Georgia Tech went 2-14 in the conference last season, but Hewitt is hoping his three starting freshmen, Favors, Udofia, Oliver and Glen Rice Jr., can help turn the school's fortunes.

"They're good players," he said.

Florida State, 10-6 in the ACC last season, won its fourth straight in the series. Deividus Dulkys had 12 points, and Solomon Alabi finished with 12 rebounds for the Seminoles.



HATTIESBURG AMERICAN, MATT BUSH/AP

Middle Tennessee players hoist the trophy after beating Southern Mississippi in the New Orleans Bowl at the Superdome on Sunday. Middle Tennessee won 42-32.

New Orleans Bowl

On Dasher: QB runs, passes Middle Tennessee to victory

BY MARY FOSTER
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Dwight Dasher limped off the field twice during the New Orleans Bowl, though his ankle injury really didn't seem to slow him down.

The Middle Tennessee quarterback provided 363 of the Blue Raiders 450 yards of offense and four touchdowns in their 42-32 victory over Southern Mississippi on Sunday night.

Dasher rushed 26 times for a New Orleans Bowl-record 201 yards and two touchdowns, and completed 15 of 25 passes for 162 yards and two touchdowns. His rushing total was the highest by a quarterback in a bowl game, surpassing the 200 that Vince Young had for Texas against USC in the 2006 Rose Bowl.

It was enough to make him forget his tender left ankle.

"I told coach that it was no kind of injury," Dasher said. "Unless something was broke, I was going back in."

Dasher also became the ninth player in Football Bowl Subdivision history to pass for 2,000 yards and rush for 1,000 yards in the same season.

"Obviously, it was difficult stopping him," Southern Miss

coach Larry Fedora said. "We knew going in that he was a heck of a player, and he showed that tonight. We sent him out a great player. He single-handedly did it against us."

Middle Tennessee (10-3), playing in the second bowl game in school history, concluded its best season since joining the Football Bowl Subdivision in 1999 with a seven-game winning streak and its first bowl victory.

"Dwight was hurt a lot more than he let on," Middle Tennessee coach Rick Stockstill said. "His performance is an example of what our team stands for — no matter what, if you can walk you're going to get out there and play that next down."

Southern Miss (7-6) was playing in its eighth straight bowl game and 12th in the last 13 seasons. The Golden Eagles had won their three previous New Orleans Bowls, including in overtime against Troy last season.

Martevious Young completed 18 of 34 passes for 271 yards and three touchdowns for Southern Miss. He also threw two interceptions.

Golden Eagles running back Damion Fletcher ran for 78 yards to finish the season with 1,015 and become the ninth player in major

college football to reach 1,000 in all four seasons.

He did it despite a hamstring injury that caused him to sit out one game this season.

With 5,302 yards rushing overall, Fletcher passed Herschel Walker (5,259) and LaDainian Tomlinson (5,263) for eighth on the NCAA's career list.

"It was great to be up there in the company with those eight or nine guys," Fletcher said. "I worked really hard and it means a lot to me. It was great playing and being a Golden Eagle."

Southern Miss held a 17-14 edge at halftime, and Dasher opened the third quarter with a 35-yard touchdown run. When Dasher left briefly with an ankle injury, Brent Burnette capped a 76-yard scoring drive with a 23-yard TD pass to Chris McClover.

Daniel Hrapmann hit a 38-yard field goal to cut the Blue Raiders' lead to eight at 28-20 at the end of three quarters.

Southern Miss had a chance to tie it early in the fourth, pulling to 28-26 on DeAndre's 7 yard TD reception, but the 2-point conversion failed.

Benjamin Cunningham and Dasher ran for touchdowns to put it out of reach for Middle Tennessee.

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SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFN

Tuesday
AFN-Sports, 5 p.m.—NBA: Cleveland at Phoenix (dld).
AFN-Sports, 9 p.m.—NFL: N.Y. Giants at Washington (dld).

Wednesday
AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.—NFL: N.Y. Giants at Washington (dld).
AFN-Sports, 10 a.m.—College football: Las Vegas Bowl, Oregon State vs. BYU.
AFN-Xtra, 10 a.m.—NHL: San Jose at Chicago.
AFN-Xtra, 12:30 p.m.—NHL: Nashville at Vancouver.
AFN-Sports, 5 p.m.—College basketball: Michigan State at Texas.
AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.—College basketball: California at Kansas.
AFN-Sports, 10 p.m.—NFL RePlay: Game 1, Indianapolis at Jacksonville (dld, 90-minute cutdown).
AFN-Sports, 11:30 p.m.—NFL RePlay: Game 2, Green Bay at Pittsburgh (dld, 90-minute cutdown).

Thursday
AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.—College football: Las Vegas Bowl, Oregon State vs. BYU (dld).
AFN-Xtra, 9 a.m.—NBA: Houston at Orlando.
AFN-Sports, 10 a.m.—College football: Poinsettia Bowl, Utah vs. California.
AFN-Xtra, noon—NBA: Cleveland at Sacramento.
AFN-Sports, 5 p.m.—College basketball: Mississippi at West Virginia (dld).
AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.—College basketball: Illinois at Missouri (dld).
AFN-Sports, 10 p.m.—NFL RePlay: Game 3, teams TBD (dld, 90-minute cutdown).
AFN-Sports, 11:30 p.m.—NFL RePlay: Game 4, teams TBD (dld, 90-minute cutdown).

All times are Japan and Korea Standard; (dld) indicates delayed broadcast. All listings are subject to change. Visit www.myafn.net for more information.

College hockey

Sunday's score
EAST
Canisius 7, Colgate 6, OT

High school

Japan

Boys

Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Japan Basketball League

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Nile C. Kinnick	2	0	1.000	—
E.J. King	5	1	.667	2
Yokota	3	2	.600	2
Robert D. Edgren	2	2	.500	2½
Zama American	2	4	.333	3½
Matthew C. Perry	0	5	.000	5

Kanto Plain Association of Secondary Schools

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Yokota	2	0	1.000	—
CAIJ	1	0	1.000	½
Nile C. Kinnick	2	1	.667	½
ASIJ	2	1	.667	½
St. Mary's Int'l	1	2	.333	1½
Zama American	0	4	.000	3

Overall

	W	L	Pct.	GB
CAIJ	12	1	.923	—
Nile C. Kinnick	9	5	.643	3½
E.J. King	4	2	.667	4½
Robert D. Edgren	4	2	.667	4½
ASIJ	2	1	.667	5
Yokota	7	7	.500	5½
St. Mary's Int'l	8	9	.471	6
Zama American	2	6	.250	7½
Matthew C. Perry	2	6	.250	7½

Girls

Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Japan Basketball League

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Zama American	5	1	.833	—
Nile C. Kinnick	4	1	.800	½
Robert D. Edgren	3	1	.750	1
Yokota	2	3	.400	2½
E.J. King	0	3	.000	3½
Matthew C. Perry	0	5	.000	4½

Kanto Plain Association of Secondary Schools

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Sacred Heart	4	0	1.000	—
ASIJ	2	0	1.000	1
Yokota	2	0	1.000	1
Zama American	2	4	.333	3
Nile C. Kinnick	1	3	.250	3
CAIJ	0	1	.000	2½
Seisen International	0	3	.000	3½

Overall

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Sacred Heart	4	0	1.000	½
ASIJ	3	0	1.000	1
Robert D. Edgren	6	1	.857	—
Zama American	6	4	.600	1½
Nile C. Kinnick	5	4	.556	2
CAIJ	1	1	.500	2½
Seisen International	2	3	.400	3
Yokota	2	3	.400	3
Matthew C. Perry	2	4	.333	3½
E.J. King	1	5	.167	4½

College basketball

Sunday's men's scores
EAST
Binghamton 70, Marist 52
Boston College 72, Bryant 46
Clarion 82, Penn St.-DuBois 58
Connecticut 60, UCF 51
Davis & Elkins 98, Chestnut Hill 90
Delaware 56, Vermont 50
East Stroudsburg 73, Caldwell 60
Elizabethtown 72, Muhlenberg 61
Lycoming 89, Dickinson 74
New Hampshire 69, Dartmouth 59
Philadelphia 70, St. Rose 61
Princeton at Maine, ppd.
Rhode Island 89, Fairfield 84
Saint Joseph's 77, Lehigh 66
Stony Brook at Sacred Heart, ppd.
Towson 82, Hampton 74
UMBC 59, American U. 57
UTSA at Colgate, ppd.
SOUTH
Charlotte 57, Winthrop 47
Florida St. 66, Georgia Tech 59, OT
Guilford 96, Rust 72
Huntingdon 70, Sewanee 56
Kentucky Wesleyan 106, Urbana 79
Marshall 109, High Point 76
Nova Southeastern 68, Goucher 58
Sam Houston 107, Auburn 89
Wake Forest 67, N.C. State 59
MIDWEST
Akron 80, St. Francis, Pa. 51
Iowa St. 87, Bradley 68
Kent St. 85, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi 76
Loyola of Chicago 79, SIU-Edwardsville 61
Wis.-River Falls 85, St. Scholastica 61
SOUTHWEST
Arkansas St. 69, Ark.-Little Rock 61
Baylor 94, Texas-Arlington 63
Fla. International 80, North Texas 70, OT
Prairie View 74, Dallas Christian 69
TCU 89, St. Gregory's 62
FAR WEST
Colorado St. 64, N. Arizona 56
S. Illinois 67, San Francisco 66
South Florida 69, San Diego 60
Wyoming 86, South Dakota 74
Tournament
Aeropostale Holiday Festival
First Round
Cornell 91, Davidson 88, OT
St. John's 72, Hofstra 60

Sunday's women's scores
EAST
Boston College 62, Wright St. 56
Caldwell 61, East Stroudsburg 53
Connecticut 90, Iona 35
Dominican, N.Y. 50, LeMoyne 29
Fairfield 58, IPFW 57
Jacksonville St. at Georgetown, ppd.
La Salle 55, Rider 54
Lehigh 78, Bryant 61
Loyola, Md. 81, UMBC 74
Maryland 75, American U. 64
Massachusetts 70, N.J. Tech 59
Morehead St. 58, Robert Morris 57
Mount St. Mary's, Md. at George Washington, ppd.
New Hampshire 80, Holy Cross 71
Niagara 71, Akron 60
Rutgers 62, Cent. Connecticut St. 53
St. Michael's 58, Philadelphia 54
Villanova 44, Temple 32
West Virginia 72, Fresno St. 52
Tournament
First Round
Florida 62, Southern U. 35
High Point 66, William & Mary 58
St. John's-Chartwell Holiday Classic
Third Place
UAB 59, Texas-Arlington 46
St. John's-Chartwell Holiday Classic
Championship
St. John's 75, Virginia Tech 62
USF Shootout
Championship
East Carolina 63, South Florida 60
N.C. Central 75, Houston Baptist 60
Women of Troy Classic
Championship
Southern Cal 93, CS Bakersfield 56
Third Place
Dartmouth 49, Delaware St. 38
DePaul 75, Florida St. 60
Semifinals
Kansas St. 73, Va. Commonwealth 67
UTSA 71, Arkansas 55
Gator Invitational
First Round
Florida 62, Southern U. 35
High Point 66, William & Mary 58
St. John's-Chartwell Holiday Classic
Third Place
UAB 59, Texas-Arlington 46
St. John's-Chartwell Holiday Classic
Championship
St. John's 75, Virginia Tech 62
USF Shootout
Championship
East Carolina 63, South Florida 60
N.C. Central 75, Houston Baptist 60
Women of Troy Classic
Championship
Southern Cal 93, CS Bakersfield 56
Third Place
Dartmouth 49, Delaware St. 38

Boxing

Fight schedule
Jan. 9
At Magdeburg, Germany, Edison Miranda vs. Robert Stieglitz, for Miranda's WBO super middleweight title.
Jan. 11
At Tokyo, Juan Carlos Salgado vs. Takashi Uchiyama, 12, for Salgado's WBA super featherweight title; Poonswat Kratingdaengym vs. Satoshi Hosono, 12, for Kratingdaengym's WBA super bantamweight title.
Jan. 23
At Manila, Philippines, Brian Viloria vs. Carlos Tamara, 12, for Viloria's IBF junior flyweight title; Donnie Nietes vs. Ivan Meneses, 12, for Nietes' WBO straw-weight title.
At Madison Square Garden, New York, Steven Luevano vs. Juan Manuel Lopez, 12, for Luevano's WBO featherweight title; Yuriorkis Gamboa vs. Rogers Mtagwa, 12, for Gamboa's WBA featherweight title.

TANK McNAMARA



College football

Bowl schedule
Saturday, Dec. 19
New Mexico Bowl
At Albuquerque
Wyoming 25, Fresno State 28, 2OT
St. Petersberg (Fla.) Bowl
Rutgers 45, UCF 24
Sunday, Dec. 20
New Orleans Bowl
Middle Tennessee 42, Southern Miss. 32
Tuesday, Dec. 22
Las Vegas Bowl
BYU (10-2) vs. Oregon State (8-4)
Wednesday, Dec. 23
Poinsettia Bowl
At San Diego
Utah (9-3) vs. California (8-4)
Thursday, Dec. 24
Hawaii Bowl
At Honolulu
SMU (7-5) vs. Nevada (8-4)
Saturday, Dec. 26
Little Caesars Pizza Bowl
At Detroit
Ohio (9-4) vs. Marshall (6-6)
Meineke Bowl
At Charlotte, N.C.
North Carolina (8-4) vs. Pittsburgh (9-3)
Sunday, Dec. 27
Music City Bowl
At Nashville, Tenn.
Clemson (8-5) vs. Kentucky (7-5)
Monday, Dec. 28
Independence Bowl
At Shreveport, La.
Texas A&M (6-6) vs. Georgia (7-5)
Tuesday, Dec. 29
EagleBank Bowl
At Washington
Temple (9-3) vs. UCLA (6-6)
Champs Sports Bowl
At Orlando, Fla.
Miami (9-3) vs. Wisconsin (9-3)
Wednesday, Dec. 30
Humanitarian Bowl
At Boise, Idaho
Bowling Green (7-5) vs. Idaho (7-5)
Holiday Bowl
At San Diego
Nebraska (9-4) vs. Arizona (8-4)
Thursday, Dec. 31
Armed Forces Bowl
At Fort Worth, Texas
Air Force (7-5) vs. Houston (10-3)
Sun Bowl
At El Paso, Texas
Stanford (8-4) vs. Oklahoma (7-5)
Texas Bowl
At Houston
Missouri (8-4) vs. Navy (9-4)
Insight Bowl
At Tempe, Ariz.
Minnesota (6-6) vs. Iowa State (6-6)
Chick-fil-A Bowl
At Atlanta
Virginia Tech (9-3) vs. Tennessee (7-5)
Friday, Jan. 1
Outback Bowl
At Tampa, Fla.
Northwestern (8-4) vs. Auburn (7-5)
Capital One Bowl
At Orlando, Fla.
Penn State (10-2) vs. LSU (9-3)
Gator Bowl
At Jacksonville, Fla.
Florida State (6-6) vs. West Virginia (9-3)
Rose Bowl
At Pasadena, Calif.
Ohio State (10-2) vs. Oregon (10-2)
Sugar Bowl
At New Orleans
Florida (12-1) vs. Cincinnati (12-0)
Saturday, Jan. 2
International Bowl
At Toronto
South Florida (7-5) vs. Northern Illinois (7-5)
Cotton Bowl
At Arlington, Texas
Oklahoma State (9-3) vs. Mississippi (8-4)
PapaJohns.com Bowl
At Birmingham, Ala.
Connecticut (7-5) vs. South Carolina (7-5)
Liberty Bowl
At Memphis, Tenn.
East Carolina (9-4) vs. Arkansas (7-5)
Alamo Bowl
At San Antonio
Michigan State (6-6) vs. Texas Tech (8-4)

Monday, Jan. 4
Fiesta Bowl
At Glendale, Ariz.
Boise State (13-0) vs. TCU (12-0)
Tuesday, Jan. 5
Orange Bowl
At Miami
Iowa (10-2) vs. Georgia Tech (11-2)
Wednesday, Jan. 6
GMAC Bowl
Mobile, Ala.
Central Michigan (11-2) vs. Troy (9-3)
Thursday, Jan. 7
BCS National Championship
At Pasadena, Calif.
Alabama (13-0) vs. Texas (13-0)

Sunday
Middle Tennessee 42, Southern Mississippi 32
Southern Miss. 14 3 3 12-32
Middle Tennessee 0 14 14 4-42
First Quarter
USM—D.Brown 24 pass from Young (D.Brown pass from Young), 6:35.
USM—Harrison 2 run (run failed), :01.
Second Quarter
MTSU—Andrews 11 pass from Dasher (Gendreau kick), 13:25.
MTSU—Blissard 9 pass from Dasher (Gendreau kick), 4:41.
USM—FG Hrapmann 20, :00.
Third Quarter
MTSU—Dasher 35 run (Gendreau kick), 10:12.
USM—FG Hrapmann 38, 7:36.
MTSU—McClover 23 pass from Burnette (Gendreau kick), :00.
Fourth Quarter
USM—D.Brown 7 pass from Young (pass failed), 6:52.
MTSU—Be.Cunningham 9 run (Gendreau kick), 3:14.
MTSU—Dasher 1 run (Gendreau kick), 1:13.
USM—Parham 33 pass from Young (pass failed), :27.
A—30,228.
USM
First downs 20
Rushes-yards 37-123
Passing 271
Comp-Att-Int 18-34-2
Return Yards 27
Punts-Avg. 5-37.8
Fumbles-Lost 0-0
Penalties-Yards 10-75
Time of Possession 31:41
MTSU
First downs 23
Rushes-yards 44-243
Passing 207
Comp-Att-Int 17-28-0
Return Yards 10
Punts-Avg. 4-35.3
Fumbles-Lost 2-1
Penalties-Yards 6-63
Time of Possession 28:19

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
Rushing—Southern Miss. Fletcher 17-78, Young 9-24, Harrison 10-21, Lampley 1-0.
Middle Tennessee. Dasher 26-201, Kyles 12-35, Be.Cunningham 5-11.
Passing—Southern Miss. Young 18-34-2-271.
Middle Tennessee. Dasher 15-25-0-162, Burnette 2-3-0-45.
Receiving—Southern Miss. Baptiste 4-117, D.Brown 4-65, Fletcher 4-(minus 2), Parham 3-62, Banks 2-13, Lampley 1-16.
Middle Tennessee. McClover 4-55, Andrews 4-51, Blissard 3-10, Gee 2-45, McDonald 2-15, Caldwell 1-22, Honeycutt 1-9.

Interservice

South Korea

Basketball

2009-10 Korea Traveling League

Men

League

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Camp Casey	5	1	.833	—
Kunsan Air Base	4	1	.800	½
Osan Air Base	4	1	.800	½
Yongsan Garrison	2	1	.667	1½
Daegu/Area IV	4	4	.500	2
Camp Casey	6	3	.667	3
Camp Humphreys	0	3	.000	3½
Suwon Air Base	0	6	.000	5

Overall

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Kunsan Air Base	12	2	.857	—
Osan Air Base	14	5	.800	½
Camp Casey	6	3	.667	3½
Daegu/Area IV	4	4	.500	5
Camp Humphreys	6	10	.375	7
Suwon Air Base	1	13	.071	11½
Camp Red Cloud	0	5	.000	7½

Saturday, Dec. 12
Yongsan Garrison 90, Kunsan Air Base 82
Camp Casey 83, Daegu/Area IV 78
Sunday, Dec. 13
Saturday, Dec. 19
Daegu/Area IV 93, Suwon Air Base 82
Sunday, Dec. 20
Osan Air Base 71, Camp Red Cloud 64
Daegu/Area IV 85, Suwon Air Base 80

Women

League

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Camp Casey	2	0	1.000	—
Camp Humphreys	2	0	1.000	—
Osan Air Base	2	0	1.000	—
Kunsan Air Base	1	2	.333	1½
Daegu/Area IV	0	2	.000	2
Yongsan Garrison	0	3	.000	2½

Overall

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Camp Casey	5	0	1.000	1½
Osan Air Base	10	2	.833	—
Camp Humphreys	8	5	.615	2½
Yongsan Garrison	6	10	.375	6
Kunsan Air Base	1	2	.333	4½
Daegu/Area IV	0	2	.000	5

Saturday, Dec. 12
Kunsan Air Base 53, Yongsan Garrison 52
Sunday, Dec. 13
Camp Casey 75, Daegu/Area IV 51

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division							
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
New Jersey	34	25	8	1	51	102	75
Pittsburgh	36	25	10	1	51	116	91
N.Y. Rangers	35	16	16	3	35	96	101
N.Y. Islanders	36	13	16	7	33	88	116
Philadelphia	34	15	17	2	32	94	99
Northeast Division							
Buffalo	34	21	10	3	45	91	74
Ottawa	35	18	13	4	40	100	101
Boston	34	16	11	7	39	88	87
Montreal	37	16	18	3	35	93	104
Toronto	36	13	16	7	33	104	127
Southeast Division							
Washington	36	22	8	6	50	130	100
Atlanta	34	18	13	3	39	112	104
Florida	37	15	15	7	37	107	121
Tampa Bay	35	12	14	9	33	87	107
Carolina	35	9	20	6	24	88	128

Western Conference

Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Chicago	34	23	8	3	49	103	71
Nashville	36	22	11	3	47	106	101
Detroit	36	18	13	5	41	98	96
St. Louis	34	15	14	5	35	84	95
Columbus	36	14	15	7	35	103	126
Northwest Division							
Colorado	37	20	11	6	46	109	107
Calgary	35	20	11	4	44	101	87
Vancouver	36	20	16	0	40	110	93
Minnesota	35	17	15	3	37	90	99
Edmonton	35	15	16	4	34	105	113
Pacific Division							
Los Angeles	37	22	12	3	47	111	108
San Jose	35	20	8	7	47	115	93
Phoenix	36	21	13	2	44	91	83
Dallas	35	15	9	11	41	105	108
Anaheim	35	14	14	7	35	99	111
Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.							

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Saturday's games

N.Y. Rangers 2, Philadelphia 1
Dallas 4, Detroit 3
Anaheim 4, Phoenix 2
Nashville 5, Calgary 3
Pittsburgh 2, Buffalo 1, SO
Montreal 3, N.Y. Islanders 0
Carolina 3, Florida 2
Ottawa 4, Minnesota 1
New Jersey 5, Atlanta 4
Toronto 2, Boston 0
Colorado 5, Columbus 2
Washington 4, Edmonton 2

Sunday's games

Chicago 3, Detroit 0
St. Louis 3, Vancouver 1
Monday's games
N.Y. Rangers at Carolina
Florida at Philadelphia
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Islanders
Montreal at Atlanta
Buffalo at Toronto
Boston at Ottawa
New Jersey at Pittsburgh
Colorado at Minnesota
San Jose at Dallas
Columbus at Phoenix
St. Louis at Edmonton
Tuesday's games
San Jose at Chicago
Anaheim at Colorado
Nashville at Vancouver

Sunday

Blackhawks 3, Red Wings 0

Detroit 0 0 0-0
Chicago 1 2 0-3
First Period—1, Chicago, Keith 6
(Toews, Versteeg), 7:58 (pp).
Second Period—2, Chicago, Campbell 3 (Sharp, Ladd), 16:05. 3, Chicago, Byfuglien 10 (Madden, Keith), 19:27.
Shots on Goal—Detroit 5-5-10—20. Chicago 8-14-13—35.
Power-play opportunities—Detroit 0 of 2; Chicago 1 of 4.
Goalies—Detroit, Osgood 7-6-4 (35 shots-32 saves). Chicago, Huet 16-7-2 (20-20).
A—21,781 (19,717). T—2:17.

Blues 3, Canucks 1

St. Louis 1 2 0-3
Vancouver 1 0 0-1
First Period—1, St. Louis, Backes 8 (Kariya, Oshie), 2:59 (pp). 2, Vancouver, O'Brien 1 (Samuelsson, Raymond), 17:15.
Second Period—3, St. Louis, Backes 9 (Steen), 11:48. 4, St. Louis, Tkachuk 8 (Boyes, Jackman), 13:15.
Shots on Goal—St. Louis 8-14-4—26. Vancouver 14-7-9—30.
Power-play opportunities—St. Louis 1 of 3; Vancouver 0 of 4.
Goalies—St. Louis, Conklin 6-4-1 (30 shots-29 saves). Vancouver, Luongo 16-12-0 (26-23).
A—18,810 (18,630). T—2:28.

Scoring leaders

Through Dec. 20

GP	G	A	PTS
Joe Thornton, SJ	35	9	39
Marian Gaborik, NYR	33	24	21
Henrik Sedin, Van	36	15	29
Sidney Crosby, Pit	35	22	21
Alex Ovechkin, Was	28	23	18
Nicklas Backstrom, Was	36	12	28
Brad Richards, Dal	33	10	29
Ryan Getzlaf, Anh	35	9	30
Corey Perry, Anh	35	16	22
Anze Kopitar, LA	37	16	22
Martin St. Louis, TB	35	7	31
Dany Heatley, SJ	35	21	16
Patrick Marleau, SJ	35	21	16
Jarome Iginla, Cgy	35	19	37
Dustin Penner, Edm	35	18	37

Calendar

Jan. 1 — Winter Classic: Philadelphia Flyers vs. Boston Bruins at Fenway Park.
Feb. 15-Feb. 28 — Olympic break.
Feb. 11 — Regular season ends.

NHL roundup

Huet, Blackhawks shut out Red Wings

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Cristobal Huet and the Chicago Blackhawks had an easier time than usual in beating the rival Detroit Red Wings on Sunday night.

Huet made 20 saves for his second straight shutout, and Duncan Keith had a goal and an assist to lead the Blackhawks to their fourth victory in a row, 3-0 over Detroit.

Brian Campbell and Dustin Byfuglien also scored to help Chicago move back into first place in the Central Division. Detroit, shut out for the fourth time in its past 15 games, has lost two straight.

Huet, also a 3-0 winner over St. Louis on Wednesday night, had to make only a handful of tough saves against the injury-depleted Red Wings en route to his third shutout this season, 23rd overall

and first against Detroit.

Over the past several seasons, Chicago's meetings with Detroit — winners of eight straight Central Division titles — usually have been rollicking. On Sunday, however, the Blackhawks controlled and subdued the Red Wings, who skated without eight regulars and played the second of back-to-back road games.

"We respect Detroit very much, even though they're missing a lot of top guys, and key guys," Huet said. "We knew it would be a tight game, so we were disciplined and it paid off."

Among the injured Red Wings was scoring leader Henrik Zetterberg. He missed his second game because of a shoulder injury and will be out at least two weeks.

On Detroit's two best chances, Huet made a glove save on Ville

Leino late in the first period, and a pad save on Brad Stuart midway through the second.

"They're still a top team in the league," Huet said. "They still have (Nicklas) Lidstrom and (Brian) Rafalski and (Pavel) Datsyuk. They're going to have a full lineup; it should be a good test."

If the Blackhawks were using the Red Wings as measuring stick, it seemed shorter than usual.

"We always want to be our best," Keith said. "This (Detroit) has been good for a long time. Do we want to measure ourselves? I think we want to do that against every team, every time."

Detroit's Chris Osgood stopped 32 shots.

Blues 3, Canucks 1: At Vancouver, British Columbia, David Backes scored twice, and Ty Conklin made 29 saves to help St.

Louis move out of last place in the Western Conference.

After being swept out of the first round of the playoffs by the Canucks last season, the Blues have already beaten them twice this season by a combined score of 9-2.

Backes opened the scoring on an early power-play deflection and put the Blues back ahead 2-1 with a great effort with 8:12 left in the second. He raced around defenseman Kevin Bieksa off the left wing, cut hard to the net and tucked the puck past goalie Roberto Luongo.

Keith Tkachuk doubled the lead 1:27 later and the Blues won for the second time in five games.

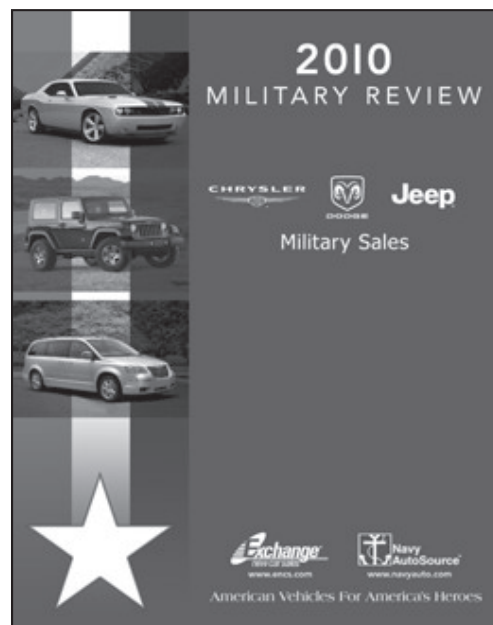
Shane O'Brien scored for Vancouver, his first goal in more than two seasons.



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Sports briefs

Herbst goes 2-for-2 in slalom

The Associated Press

ALTA BADIA, Italy — Reinfried Herbst made it two victories in two slalom races this season with a victory Monday on the Gran Risa course.

Moving up from second after the first leg, Herbst won in a two-run combined time of 1 minute, 49.31 seconds. Silvan Zurbriggen of Switzerland had the fastest second leg and finished second, 0.08 seconds behind, and first-run leader Manfred Pranger ended up third, 0.17 back.

Olympic combined champion Ted Ligety struggled with the setting and failed to qualify for the second run in 39th place, while American teammate Bode Miller sat out to rest his sore ankle. Jimmy Cochran was the only American to complete both runs, finishing in ninth place.

Florida's James out for Sugar Bowl after surgery

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Florida's Brandon James, who leads the team in all-purpose yards, won't play in the Sugar Bowl after having surgery on his right foot.

James, a senior from St. Augustine, broke a bone in his foot against Alabama in the Southeastern Conference title game and had surgery last week. Florida coach Urban Meyer said Chris Rainey, Jeff Demps and Joe Haden will take over James' punt and kickoff return duties against No. 4 Cincinnati on New Year's Day.

James finished with 1,324 total yards and two touchdowns this season. He had 109 yards rushing, 215 yards receiving and a score, 756 yards and a touchdown on kickoff returns and 244 yards on punt returns.

Cowboys bringing in kickers to challenge slumping Folk

IRVING, Texas — The Dallas Cowboys are opening up the kicking competition after Nick Folk's latest key miss against New Orleans.

Cowboys coach Wade Phillips wouldn't specify which or how many kickers the Cowboys were bringing in Monday.

Folk clanged the upright on an easy 24-yarder that would have put away Saturday night's 24-17 victory against the unbeaten Saints. Instead, the Dallas defense had to make one more stand against one of the league's best offenses.

Folk leads the NFL with 10 misses, going 18-for-28. Several of them have hurt the Cowboys' chances late in games.

In other NFL news:

■ Arizona Cardinals left tackle Mike Gandy underwent surgery Friday to repair a sports hernia.

Coach Ken Whisenhunt said Monday the operation was performed in Philadelphia and the recovery time is expected to be three to six weeks. Whisenhunt said no decision has been made on whether to keep Gandy on the active roster or place him on season-ending injury reserve.

■ Former Cleveland Browns general manager George Kokinis



ALESSANDRO TROVATI/AP

Austria's Reinfried Herbst bites his skis in the finish area after winning a men's World Cup slalom Monday in Alta Badia, Italy. Herbst has raced in two slaloms this season, winning both.

filed for arbitration against the team for firing him.

Kokinis was dismissed by the Browns on Nov. 2. He filed the case with NFL commissioner Roger Goodell for breach of contract and fraudulent misrepresentation.

Kokinis is seeking more than \$4 million in compensation and damages. He asserts that the Browns fraudulently induced him to join the team under the representation that he would have control over all player personnel matters and report directly to owner Randy Lerner.

■ Tampa Bay rookie receiver Sammie Stroughter will miss the remainder of the season after breaking his right foot during the Buccaneers' 24-7 victory over the Seattle Seahawks.

The seventh-round draft pick was hurt during the second half of Sunday's game. He was placed on injured reserve Monday. Ravens rookie CB Webb out for season with ACL tear

■ Baltimore Ravens rookie cornerback Lardarius Webb will miss the remainder of the season with a torn ligament in his right knee.

Webb tore the anterior cruciate ligament in Sunday's 31-7 victory over the Chicago Bears.

Drafted in the third round out of Nicholls State, Webb began his NFL career as a contributor on special teams. He saw spot duty on defense before stepping into a starting role on Nov. 29 against Pittsburgh as a replacement for the injured Fabian Washington.

Ravens coach John Harbaugh said Monday that the team will likely go outside the organization in an effort to find another defensive back. Harbaugh did not rule out the return of Chris McAlister, who was released by the Ravens during the offseason and played briefly with New Orleans this year.

Indians get pitcher from Rays

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Indians acquired pitcher Mitch Talbot from Tampa Bay on Monday, completing the trade that sent catcher Kelly Shoppach to the Rays. The Indians also sent cash with Shoppach to the Rays in the Dec. 1 deal.

Talbot, 26, was limited to 10 starts last season at Triple-A Durham because of a strained elbow. The right-hander went 4-4 with a 4.47 ERA and was able to finish the year on a positive note by making two starts in the International League playoffs.

Talbot was drafted by Houston in 2002 and traded to Tampa Bay in 2006 for Aubrey Huff.

In other baseball news:

■ Chip Caray is headed back to the Atlanta Braves broadcasting booth. Caray said Monday he was hired to be the team's play-by-play man on Fox Sports South and SportsSouth and is expected to work about 105 games next season. The hire came three weeks after he parted ways with Turner Sports.

Caray, 44, is the son of late Braves broadcaster Skip Caray and a grandson of famed broadcaster Harry Caray. He called first-round playoff games for TBS during the past three seasons and also worked a few dozen Atlanta games this season for a local Turner-owned station.

■ The San Diego Padres acquired catcher Dusty Ryan from the Detroit Tigers for a player to be named or cash. Ryan appeared in 12 games for the Tigers last year, going 4-for-26 with four RBIs. He made his big league debut with Detroit in 2008. He's made 22 career starts.

Stars put Fistic on IR

DALLAS — The Dallas Stars placed defenseman Mark Fistic on injured reserve with a head

injury Monday and recalled Ivan Vishnevskiy from their AHL affiliate.

He has a goal and three assists in 30 games for the Stars.

NC State's Smith suspended

RALEIGH, N.C. — North Carolina State said Monday that leading scorer Tracy Smith was suspended for one game for his comments on the officiating in the Wolfpack's loss to Wake Forest.

Coach Sidney Lowe said Monday that the junior forward will practice and will travel to Arizona for Wednesday's game, but won't play.

After Sunday night's 67-59 loss in Winston-Salem, Smith told reporters that the officiating crew called too many "touch fouls" and "favored Wake Forest all the way."

Smith had 11 points and 10 rebounds but was in foul trouble most of the night, fouling out with 5:28 remaining.

Magic PG Jameer Nelson to play against Jazz

ORLANDO, Fla. — Jameer Nelson is back for the Orlando Magic. Coach Stan Van Gundy said Monday the All-Star point guard would play against the Utah Jazz on Monday night. Nelson will come off the bench in place of Jason Williams, pushing Anthony Johnson back into a reserve role.

Nelson has not played since he had surgery Nov. 18 to repair torn cartilage in his left knee. He practiced for the first time in about a month Sunday. He was averaging 13.7 points and 5.5 assists before getting hurt.

This won't be the first time he has returned from surgery.

Nelson injured his right shoulder in February and had it repaired. In a surprise move, he returned early for the NBA finals but struggled as Orlando lost to the Lakers in five games.

Kansas still No. 1; Texas gets closer

By JIM O'CONNELL
The Associated Press

Kansas will be spending at least one more week atop The Associated Press' college basketball poll, a spot it has held all season.

Another Big 12 team from that state jumped to territory it hasn't been in over 25 years.

Kansas State moved up to No. 12 on Monday, its highest ranking since placing ninth in the final poll of 1972-73.

The Jayhawks (10-0), who beat Michigan 75-64 in their only game last week, saw their lead over Texas trimmed a bit. They received 55 first-place votes from the 65-member national media panel, six less than it had a week earlier. Those votes went to Texas (10-0), which beat No. 10 North Carolina 103-90 on Saturday, and was No. 1 on seven ballots.

Kentucky (11-0) had one first-place vote and was third, followed by Purdue (10-0) and Syracuse (11-0), which was No. 1 on two ballots.

West Virginia, Duke and Villanova remained 6-7-8, while Michigan State moved up three places to ninth and North Carolina remained 10th.

Connecticut moved up three spots to 11th and was followed by Kansas State, New Mexico, Georgetown, Mississippi, Tennessee, Ohio State, Florida, Texas A&M and Butler.

Temple, making its first appearance in the poll since November 2001, was No. 21, followed by Washington, Texas Tech, Clemson and Gonzaga.

Kansas State (10-1) beat Alabama 87-74 last week to run its winning streak to seven since an 86-74 loss to Mississippi in the semifinals of the Puerto Rico Tip-Off. Temple (9-2) made its move into the rankings after handing Big East opponents Villanova and Seton Hall their first losses of the season.

AP Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Dec. 20, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Kansas (55)	10-0	1,611	1
2. Texas (7)	10-0	1,543	2
3. Kentucky (1)	11-0	1,477	3
4. Purdue	10-0	1,422	4
5. Syracuse (2)	11-0	1,397	5
6. West Virginia	9-0	1,290	6
7. Duke	9-1	1,249	7
8. Villanova	10-1	1,175	8
9. Michigan St.	9-2	1,046	12
10. North Carolina	8-3	959	10
11. Connecticut	7-2	950	14
12. Kansas St.	10-1	810	17
13. New Mexico	12-0	707	19
14. Georgetown	8-1	676	11
15. Mississippi	10-1	624	20
16. Tennessee	8-2	616	9
17. Ohio St.	9-2	562	18
18. Florida	8-2	519	13
19. Texas A&M	9-2	320	23
20. Butler	8-3	315	21
21. Temple	9-2	244	—
22. Washington	7-2	194	24
23. Texas Tech	9-1	192	16
24. Clemson	10-2	151	—
25. Gonzaga	8-3	146	15

Others receiving votes: Florida St. 127, UNLV 126, Wisconsin 96, Northwestern 89, Georgia Tech 76, St. John's 53, Miami 50, Missouri St. 45, Dayton 39, Charlotte 29, Oklahoma St. 29, UAB 29, Saint Mary's, Calif. 21, BYU 20, Wichita St. 18, Memphis 16, Tulsa 12, N.C. State 11, Cincinnati 9, Mississippi St. 8, Baylor 6, Wake Forest 4, California 3, Virginia Tech 3, William & Mary 3, Richmond 2, W. Virginia 2, Army 1, N.Iowa 1, Pittsburgh 1, Rhode Island 1.

NBA roundup

No Dirk, no problem

Nowitzki sits as Mavs end Cavs' streak

The Associated Press

DALLAS — With a bunch of versatile veterans, the Dallas Mavericks figure they can play any style of game and with any configuration of their lineup.

That means they even like their chances against, say, LeBron James and Shaquille O'Neal on a night when Dirk Nowitzki is in street clothes.

Seem silly? Not after the Nowitzki-less Mavs beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 102-95 Sunday night.

Tim Thomas replaced Nowitzki in the starting lineup and did a nice impression with 22 points, and six others scored at least eight points. But it was on defense where Dallas really did a number on the Cavs.

James scored only two of his 25 points in the fourth quarter, and O'Neal made only one basket in the game. Mo Williams scored just eight points as Cleveland had a five-game winning streak end, as well as a four-game run against the Mavericks.

"I think we just went about it the same way as if Dirk was playing," said Jason Kidd, who had 10 points and 11 assists for Dallas. "We didn't make a big emphasis on 'Dirk's out so we've got to get 25 points from one individual.' We've got enough guys who can put the ball in the basket. We have to play defense and as a team we did that tonight."

The Cavaliers fell behind midway through the second quarter and couldn't regain the lead. They came as close as 84-83 in the fourth quarter, but the Mavericks pulled away with a 12-4 spurt capped by three-pointers from Kidd and Jason Terry.

Dallas won for the sixth time in seven games. Both teams are 20-8.

"That's why they're one of the best teams in the league," James said. "Even without Dirk they've got All-Stars like Josh Howard and Jason Kidd and Jason Terry. Tim Thomas played great tonight. Guys stepped up."

Nowitzki was recovering from a gruesome collision with Houston's Carl Landry on Friday night in which Landry lost five teeth, two of which became embedded in Nowitzki's right elbow. He needed several stitches to close the wound and lots of medicine and treatment Saturday, but on Sunday he was just too sore, stiff and sensitive to the touch.

"I tried to go a little bit, got some jumpers up before the game, but I just couldn't get my elbow up, couldn't really extend it, so it didn't really make any sense (to play)," Nowitzki said. "Looking at the game now, it was a great decision. We got the win and I got a little rest."

He's hoping to return for



TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

Dallas Mavericks center Erick Dampier, left, and Cleveland Cavaliers forward J.J. Hickson (21) compete for a rebound Sunday in Dallas.

Tuesday night's game against Portland.

"I'm on every pill there is," he said. "We'll just see how it responds. If it's not Tuesday, definitely on [Saturday]."

Thomas started for the first time since joining Dallas, and was playing only his 12th game because of injuries. He was 7-of-14 with seven rebounds and two assists. He played a lot like Nowitzki, too, mixing two three-pointers with some inside baskets and six free throws.

"I just wanted to be aggressive with the minutes I was given tonight," Thomas said. "For the last couple of years, I've been stuck in situations where I've been pretty much stuck behind the three-point line, and coming into this season I told coach I wanted to get back to playing an all-around game, which is my strength. He's allowed me to do that and that's what I am capable of doing."

Lakers 93, Pistons 81: Kobe Bryant scored 28 points as Los Angeles closed a five-game trip with a four-game winning streak and an NBA-best 22-4 record.

Andrew Bynum scored 16 points, Ron Artest had 14 points and nine assists, and Pau Gasol added 13 points and 11 rebounds for the Lakers.

Rodney Stuckey scored 16 points, Swedish rookie Jonas Jerebko had 15 and rookie reserve Austin Daye added 10 points for the undermanned Pistons.

Celtics 122, Timberwolves 104: Paul Pierce scored 29 points and hit all six of his three-point attempts as host Boston finished with a season high in points two nights after having an 11-game winning streak end.

Kendrick Perkins had 14 points to go with 11 rebounds, and Rajon Rondo had 13 points and 15 assists

as the Celtics beat the Timberwolves for the sixth consecutive time since acquiring Kevin Garnett during the summer of 2007.

Grizzlies 102, Nuggets 96: Zach Randolph had 32 points and a career-high 24 boards, the highest rebound total in the league this season.

Rudy Gay added 19 points as host Memphis snapped an eight-game losing streak to Denver. Marc Gasol had 14 points and 13 rebounds, and O.J. Mayo and Mike Conley scored 11 apiece.

Trail Blazers 102, Heat 95: Brandon Roy scored 11 of his 28 points late in the fourth quarter and LaMarcus Aldridge added 23 for visiting Portland, which trailed by six with 5½ minutes remaining.

Dwyane Wade scored 28 points and had 10 assists for the Heat, but he was 13-of-31 from the field and didn't have a rebound for only the fourth time in his career. Quentin Richardson was 7-of-7 from three-point range, tying a Heat record, and scored 22 points for Miami.

Raptors 98, Hornets 92: Chris Bosh had 25 points and 11 rebounds, and Andrea Bargnani had 13 points and 11 boards.

Jarrett Jack had 15 points and Hedo Turkoglu scored 14 for the Raptors, who held the visiting Hornets to 39 percent shooting.

Knicks 98, Bobcats 94: At New York, Wilson Chandler scored 26 points, and Danilo Gallinari added 21 points and a huge blocked shot in the closing seconds.

David Lee finished with 15 points and 15 rebounds as the Knicks won for the sixth time in eight games.

Raymond Felton had 27 points, nine rebounds and seven assists for the Bobcats.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	21	5	.808	—
Toronto	13	17	.433	10
New York	10	17	.370	11½
Philadelphia	7	20	.259	14½
New Jersey	2	26	.071	20

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	20	7	.741	—
Atlanta	19	7	.731	½
Miami	13	12	.520	6
Charlotte	10	16	.385	9½
Washington	8	17	.320	11

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	20	8	.714	—
Milwaukee	11	14	.440	7½
Detroit	11	16	.407	8½
Chicago	10	15	.400	8½
Indiana	9	16	.360	9½

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	20	8	.714	—
Houston	16	11	.593	3½
San Antonio	14	10	.583	4
New Orleans	12	14	.462	7
Memphis	12	15	.444	7½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	19	9	.679	—
Utah	16	11	.593	2½
Portland	17	12	.586	2½
Oklahoma City	13	13	.500	5
Minnesota	5	23	.179	14

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	22	4	.846	—
Phoenix	18	9	.667	4½
L.A. Clippers	12	14	.462	10
Sacramento	12	14	.462	10
Golden State	7	19	.269	15

Saturday's games

Orlando 92, Portland 83	Utah 110, Charlotte 102
L.A. Clippers 112, Philadelphia 107, OT	L.A. Lakers 103, New Jersey 84
Chicago 101, Atlanta 98, OT	San Antonio 100, Indiana 99
Houston 95, Oklahoma City 90	Sacramento 96, Milwaukee 95
Phoenix 121, Washington 95	

Sunday's games

Toronto 98, New Orleans 92	Memphis 102, Denver 96
L.A. Lakers 93, Detroit 81	Portland 102, Miami 95
Boston 122, Milwaukee 104	New York 98, Charlotte 94
Dallas 102, Cleveland 95	

Monday's games

Milwaukee at Indiana	Utah at Orlando
Sacramento at Chicago	L.A. Clippers at San Antonio
Cleveland at Phoenix	

Tuesday's games

Philadelphia at Washington	Detroit at Charlotte
Chicago at New York	Indiana at Boston
Atlanta at Minnesota	Golden State at Memphis
Portland at Dallas	L.A. Clippers at Houston
Oklahoma City at L.A. Lakers	

Sunday

Knicks 98, Bobcats 94

CHARLOTTE — Diaw 2-4 0-0 4, Jackson 5-10 0-2, Felton 11-22 2-27, Brown 5-6 0-10, Murray 4-12 4-12, Mohammed 4-5 0-18, Augustin 2-7 0-6, Henderson 0-3 2-2, Law 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 38-84 13-16 94.

NEW YORK — Gallinari 6-14 7-10 21, Jeffries 0-0 0-0 0, Lee 5-13 5-15, Duhot 5-10 0-13, W.Chandler 2-7 1-6, Harrington 4-10 1-4 10, Bender 3-4 2-11, Douglas 5-0 3-2 2. Totals 32-71 23-30 98.

Charlotte	14	31	25	24-94
New York	16	35	22	98

Three-Point Goals—Charlotte 5-18 (Felton 3-6, Augustin 2-4, Murray 0-2, Diaw 0-2, Jackson 0-4), New York 11-25 (Bender 3-3, Duhot 3-5, W.Chandler 2-3, Gallinari 2-7, Harrington 1-5, Douglas 0-2). Fouled Out—Diaw, Rebounds—Charlotte 51 (T.Chandler 14), New York 44 (Lee 15). Assists—Charlotte 19 (Felton 7), New York 23 (Lee 7). Total Fouls—Charlotte 27, New York 18. Technicals—Jackson, A.—18,767 (19,763).

Mavericks 102, Cavaliers 95

CLEVELAND — James 9-23 5-7 25, Hickson 1-2 2-4, O'Neal 1-7 3-4 5, M.Williams 4-9 0-28, Parker 5-7 0-12, Varejao 5-11 3-13, West 6-11 6-18, Ilegas 2-5 1-2 5, Gibson 2-0 0-5. Totals 37-77 20-26 95.

DALLAS — Marion 5-11 2-12, Thomas 7-14 6-7 22, Dampier 4-6 0-8, Kidd 3-8 2-12, Barea 2-8 0-0 5, Gooden 5-10 2-12, Terry 7-12 4-4 19, Howard 5-11 3-3 14. Totals 38-80 19-20 102.

Cleveland	26	24	17	28-95
Dallas	25	27	21	102

Three-Point Goals—Cleveland 5-14 (Parker 2-3, James 2-6, Gibson 1-1, West 0-1, M.Williams 0-3), Dallas 7-19 (Kidd 2-5, Thomas 2-6, Barea 1-2, Terry 1-2, Howard 1-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Cleveland 51 (O'Neal, Varejao 8), Dallas 40 (Dampier 10). Assists—Cleveland 17 (James 6), Dallas 25 (Kidd 11). Total Fouls—Cleveland 17, Dallas 20. Technicals—Cleveland defensive three second. A.—20,346 (19,200).

Calendar

Jan. 5 — 10-day contracts may be signed.

Jan. 10 — Contracts guaranteed for remainder of season.

Feb. 12-15 — All-Star weekend, Dallas.

Feb. 18 — Trade deadline, 3 p.m. EST.

April 1 — Regular season ends.

April 17 — Playoffs begin.

April 25 — Early entry deadline.

May 18 — Draft lottery.

June 3 — NBA Finals begin.

June 14 — Early entry withdrawal deadline.

Celtics 122, T-wolves 104

MINNESOTA — Wilkins 7-15 2-5 18, Love 5-8 4-15, Jefferson 9-18 2-20, Flynn 8-15 4-4 21, Brewer 3-10 2-8, Jawai 0-2 0-0 0, Sessions 3-8 5-7 11, Pavlovic 0-5 0-0 0, Hollins 2-2 4-4 8, Ellington 1-5 1-1 3, Pecherov 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 38-90 24-29 104.

BOSTON — Pierce 8-14 7-7 29, Garnett 4-5 2-2 10, Perkins 7-10 0-0 14, Rondo 6-12 1-2 13, R.Allen 8-15 1-2 20, Wallace 3-6 4-4 10, T.Allen 5-8 5-7 15, Williams 0-2 0-2 0, House 1-6 5-5 7, Scalabrine 0-1 0-0 0, Giddens 0-1 0-0 0, Hudson 0-1 4-4 4. Totals 42-81 29-35 122.

Minnesota	19	22	31	32-104
Boston	34	32	26	30-122

Three-Point Goals—Minnesota 4-12 (Wilkins 2-3, Love 1-1, Flynn 1-3, Pavlovic 0-1, Brewer 0-1, Ellington 0-3), Boston 9-18 (Pierce 6-6, R.Allen 3-6, Rondo 0-1, House 0-2, Wallace 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Minnesota 46 (Love, Jefferson 11), Boston 56 (Perkins 11), Assists—Minnesota 18 (Wilkins 6), Boston 34 (Rondo 15). Total Fouls—Minnesota 22, Boston 25. Technicals—Hollins, Minnesota defensive three second, Perkins, Boston defensive three second 2. A.—18,624 (18,624).

Lakers 93, Pistons 81

L.A. LAKERS — Artest 4-10 5-6 14, Gasol 4-11 5-6 13, A.Bynum 7-8 2-3 16, Fisher 2-3 2-2 7, Bryant 11-23 5-8 28, Odom 3-5 0-0 7, Farmer 1-6 0-0 3, Vujacic 0-0 0-0 0, S.Brown 1-9 1-2 3, Morrison 1-5 0-0 2, Mbenga 0-0 0-0 0, Powell 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 34-82 20-27 93.

DETROIT — Jerebko 7-12 1-2 15, Maxiell 3-5 2-8, Wallace 0-2 1-1 1, Atkins 1-1 0-0 7, Stuckey 6-14 4-16, Summers 2-6 0-0 5, W.Bynum 2-7 2-2 6, Villanueva 2-9 2-2 6, K.Brown 3-3 1-3 7, Daye 5-10 0-0 10. Totals 33-79 13-19 81.

L.A. Lakers	31	25	27	10-93
Detroit	19	19	24	19-81

Three-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 5-18 (Fisher 1-1, Odom 1-2, Farmer 1-3, Bryant 1-4, Artest 1-4, Morrison 0-1, Powell 0-1, S.Brown 0-2), Detroit 2-12 (Atkins 1-3, Summers 1-3, Daye 0-1, Villanueva 0-2, Jerebko 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—L.A. Lakers 57 (Gasol 11), Detroit 50 (Wallace 10), Assists—L.A. Lakers 22 (Artest 9), Detroit 19 (W.Bynum, Atkins 4). Total Fouls—L.A. Lakers 19, Detroit 26. Technicals—Bryant, A.—22,076 (22,076).

Trail Blazers 102, Heat 95

PORTLAND — Webster 4-7 4-4 15, Aldridge 10-23 3-3 23, Przybilla 3-5 2-4 8, Miller 6-10 5-6 17, Roy 11-14 1-1 28, Blake 1-5 0-0 3, Howard 1-4 0-0 2, Bayless 2-6 0-6 6, Tolliver 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 38-74 15-18 102.

MIAMI — Richardson 7-7 1-2 22, Beasley 7-13 3-4 17, O'Neal 5-10 2-12, Arroyo 0-3 0-0 0, Wade 13-31 2-28, Haslem 2-4 0-0 4, Chalmers 1-3 1-1 3, Anthony 1-1 0-0 2, Wright 2-6 0-0 4, Jones 1-1 0-0 3. Totals 39-79 9-11 95.

Portland	21	24	26	31-102
Miami	25	23	21	26-95

Three-Point Goals—Portland 11-19 (Roy 5-5, Webster 4-6, Bayless 2-4, Blake 1-3, Howard 0-1), Miami 8-16 (Richardson 7-7, Jones 1-1, Arroyo 0-1, Chalmers 0-1, Beasley 0-1, Wright 0-2, Wade 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Portland 47 (Przybilla 12), Miami 34 (Beasley, Haslem 8). Assists—Portland 20 (Roy 8), Miami 24 (Wade 10). Total Fouls—Portland 15, Miami 19. Flagrant Fouls—Miller, A.—16,500 (16,600).

Grizzlies 102, Nuggets 96

DENVER — Anthony 13-26 14-17 41, Martin 5-11 2-2 12, Nene 8-13 3-3 19, Lawson 0-3 0-0 0, Afflalo 1-5 0-0 3, Carter 3-6 0-0 8, Smith 2-12 1-2 7, Andersen 2-8 2-2 6. Totals 54-84 22-26 96.

MEMPHIS — Gay 9-16 1-3 19, Randolph 13-21 5-5 32, Gasol 6-9 2-4 14, Conley 4-11 3-4 11, Mayo 5-19 0-0 11, Thabeet 3-2 2-2 8, Tinsley 0-1 0-0 0, Young 3-10 1-2 7. Totals 43-90 14-20 102.

Denver	19	24	24	29-96
Memphis	33	28	19	22-102

Three-Point Goals—Denver 6-21 (Carter 2-3, Smith 2-6, Afflalo 1-3, Anthony 1-6, Martin 0-1, Lawson 0-2), Memphis 2-11 (Randolph 1-1, Mayo 1-6, Tinsley 0-1, Conley 0-1, Gay 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Denver 46 (Andersen 14), Memphis 61 (Randolph 24). Assists—Denver 19 (Carter 7), Memphis 16 (Conley 5). Total Fouls—Denver 21, Memphis 18. Technicals—Nene, Mayo, Randolph, Memphis defensive three second. A.—13,385 (18,119).

Raptors 98, Hornets 92

NEW ORLEANS — Stojakovic 4-15 3-4 12, West 9-21 3-3 21, Okafor 7-13 2-5 16, Paul 3-13 4-4 10, D.Brown 4-9 1-2 10, Songaila 4-6 0-0 8, Posey 1-4 0-0 3, Thornton 4-11 2-2 10, Collison 1-3 0-0 2. Totals 37-95 15-20 92.

TORONTO — Turkoglu 4-13 4-14 14, Bosh 10-16 5-6 25, Bargnani 6-14 0-13, Jack 7-12 1-1 15, DeRozan 5-8 0-0 10, Weems 3-9 1-4 7, Johnson 2-7 2-4 6, Belinelli 1-3 0-0 2, Banks 3-5 0-0 6. Totals 41-87 13-19 98.

New Orleans	22	25	22	23-92
Toronto	26	25	22	98

Three-Point Goals—New Orleans 3-21 (Posey 1-4, D.Brown 1-2, Stojakovic 1-7, West 0-1, Paul 0-1, Thornton 0-3), Toronto 3-15 (Turkoglu 2-4, Bargnani 1-6, Belinelli 0-1, Banks 0-2, Jack 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—New Orleans 53 (West 12), Toronto 62 (Johnson 12). Assists—New Orleans 19 (Paul 7), Toronto 24 (Jack, Turkoglu 7). Total Fouls—New Orleans 18, Toronto 18. A.—15,790 (19,800).

SPORTS

'I'M STAYING IN'
Favre nixes benching
in loss to Panthers
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NFL WEEK 15: STEELERS 37, PACKERS 36

'We've still got a pulse'

Big Ben's 86-yard drive resuscitates Pittsburgh's playoff hopes

By ALAN ROBINSON
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — They still wear the title of the Super Bowl champions, yet there was nothing to suggest during a dismal five-game losing streak the Pittsburgh Steelers had anything like this left in them.

So many big plays, so much yardage against one of the NFL's best defenses, so many game-saving plays. The Steelers looked to be beaten a half-dozen times by Green Bay in the fourth quarter alone, only to give themselves one last chance — not just to win the game, but to keep their season alive.

On a day when the Steelers (7-7) finally played like champions again, one play was all Ben Roethlisberger needed. One play too many for the Packers.

Roethlisberger finished off an as desperate-as-it-gets 86-yard scoring drive with a 19-yard touchdown pass to rookie Mike Wallace with no time remaining and the Steelers — more than awful for more than a month — rallied to beat Green Bay 37-36 on Sunday.

Packers coach Mike McCarthy called it a classic December game. Heartbreaking, too, but also a tense and impossible-to-script game in which the Steelers led most of the way only to fall behind twice in the fourth quarter. They also took the kind of gamble that can ruin a season by failing to convert an onside kick while leading late in the game, yet didn't lose.

"Not dead yet," coach Mike Tomlin said. "We've still got a pulse."

The same Steelers team that has lost five times while leading or tied in the fourth quarter finally found a way to win in the end. It was a crusher for the Packers (9-5), who were in position to clinch a playoff spot with a victory and a New York Giants loss or tie. Instead, they will spend the next week wondering how they couldn't hold leads of 28-27 on Ryan Grant's 24-yard TD run with 7:49 remaining and 36-30 on Aaron Rodgers' 24-yard TD pass to James Jones with 2:06 to play.

"You lose on a last-second play, with a spectacular throw and



GENE PUSKAR/AP

Pittsburgh Steelers receiver Mike Wallace, right, celebrates with receiver Hines Ward after catching the game-winning touchdown pass from Ben Roethlisberger as time expired in the fourth quarter against the Green Bay Packers on Sunday in Pittsburgh. The Steelers won 37-36.

catch, it's tough," rookie Clay Matthews said. "Hindsight's always 20-20 but we knew what we were getting ourselves into. It was a dogfight."

Oh, it was much more than that. Again, the Steelers showed they're capable of beating the good teams — they've defeated Minnesota, Denver, San Diego and Green

Bay — in the same season they've lost to Cleveland, Kansas City and Oakland. They're on the fringe of the AFC playoff race, but at least they're still in it going into next

Sunday's home game against Baltimore (8-6).

Maybe this was what the Steelers needed 10 days after one of
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Mavs snap Cavs' win streak without Nowitzki

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